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WITH MRS. BLECKLY'S KIND REGARDS.

Bellefield, Altrincham.

Christmas, 1893.



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ESSAYS AND PAPERS:

SELECTED FROM THE WRITINGS

OF

HENRY BLECKLY.



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PREFACE.

IN this volume are collected several of the pamphlets and other writings published by the late Henry Bleckly during his lifetime. Much that he contributed to newspapers, in the shape of letters or short articles on political and social questions of special interest and importance when they were written, has been excluded; for he would probably not have cared that they should outlive the occasions and ephemeral controversies that prompted them. The present purpose, moreover, is merely to place on record such more carefully thought-out literary exercises as may but serve to remind his friends that, while Mr. Bleckly was pre-eminently a man of business, and found his chief diversion from business pursuits in active work as a Justice of the Peace, and latterly as chairman of the Liverpool Quarter Sessions, he was also a diligent reader of books and a profound student of philosophical and other problems.

As some of these papers were written to be delivered as lectures to friendly audiences, and as others were printed as pamphlets at wide intervals of time, it is not strange that there should here and there be repetitions of the same thoughts and views, in almost identical language, and in a few instances slight differences of opinion. All such redundancies and discrepancies Mr. Bleckly would doubtless have removed had he contemplated a re-issue

of his writings, or a selection from them, in a compact volume. As it is, no change could be made, and it is thought that the honesty and earnestness of the writer are only made the more apparent from the occasional re-statement and re-shaping of arguments that he was anxious to set forth as forcibly and clearly as he could.

Mr. Bleckly was born at Ipswich in October, 1812, and educated at Ackworth, the well-known school in connection with the Society of Friends, to which his parents belonged. One of his schoolfellows was John Bright. Leaving school at an early age, his first business training was acquired in a bank, and he resided for some time at Newcastle-on-Tyne. Before 1856, however, he had become a partner in the Dallam Forge Iron Works at Warrington, and in that year he settled in Warrington and began to take an active part in the management of the business. He was one of the founders and principal proprietors of the Warrington Wire Iron Company (Limited), and in 1874 this company, together with the Dallam Forge Company, was amalgamated with the Wigan collieries of Messrs. Pearson and Knowles, under the style of the Pearson and Knowles Coal and Iron Company (Limited), forming one of the most important concerns of the kind in the United Kingdom. Mr. Bleckly was for many years its chairman, and, as was stated in an obituary notice in the *Times*, "to his skill and perseverance is largely due the modern rivalry of Lancashire with Staffordshire as a centre of the iron industry." "Mr. Bleckly, however," it is added in this brief memoir, "was much more than an

iron manufacturer. One of the earliest members of the Iron and Steel Institute, and founder of the Warrington Chamber of Commerce, he took a keen interest in local affairs, and particularly in Poor Law administration. He distinguished himself as a magistrate, and, after being for many years the late Lord Derby's second on the Liverpool Quarter Sessions, he succeeded to the chairmanship in 1888." Mr. Bleckly spent the last fourteen years of his life at Altrincham, taking a general superintendence of the large business with which he was connected, and devoting much time to his magisterial and other duties, and to political affairs in which he was warmly interested. There he died on the 24th of January, 1890.

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ESSAYS AND PAPERS.



THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF JOHN LOCKE.

AT the opening meeting of a new session in connection with the Warrington Literary and Philosophical Society, held at the Museum on Friday evening, November 13th, 1874, the President, Mr. Bleckly, read a paper on "The Life and Writings of John Locke."

Mr. BLECKLY said:—I have to explain how it happens that we do not meet this season at the usual time, though I am also obliged to confess that I was not exactly aware, as I ought to have been, what our rule in this respect is.

Some weeks ago, however, our excellent and zealous Secretary called to remind me that our session would commence in eight or ten days, and he wished to know whether he was to announce some special subject, for what he was pleased to call the President's address, or whether the President would take out a roving commission, and "survey mankind from China to Peru." I didn't happen to be at home when he called, and was a little startled when I received his communication, for one doesn't carry an address of such a kind in one's pocket, and men who have much other business on hand are not prepared at a moment's notice to indite one, even although they are considerably informed they need be at no loss for subjects, as "the world is all before them where to choose." The fact, moreover, happened to be that the Secretary, in his medical capacity, had enjoined me some

weeks before to take a holiday, and I had been shaping my affairs so as to obey his injunction, when he so suddenly came down upon me in his secretarial function to propound an address; in this dilemma I told him fairly that I had made preparation to obey his first order, and was not at the moment "careful to answer" him as to the second; that, indeed, I was on the point of starting for the holiday he had prescribed, that the travelling season was rapidly passing away, and that of the two, under the circumstances, I preferred to put off the business of the address, rather than postpone my journey. The Secretary made no objection, and so I took a ticket for the ancient city of Bath. I hope our rules are sufficiently flexible to meet such a case as this, but whether or no, I offer the Society an apology for the infringement of the rules that has occurred.

When one has a work to do, there is nothing like doing it at once, and so being established at Bath, I began to think of the burden the Secretary had laid upon me, and how I was to get rid of it; but first I had to ask myself whether the Society had given any directions as to the matter or manner of the address to be delivered, and although I was at the laying of the first planks of the Society, I could not remember that we had imposed upon the President any special obligation in this respect; we had, if I remember right, a sort of loose notion that our first President would occupy the position permanently, and if so, there would have been no need of any special regulation, as it would be presumed that, *con amore*, he would excogitate an annual address out of the ample scientific materials which he was constantly assimilating; he would spontaneously and naturally find out an appropriate groove and subject, without any extraneous rule or direction; without any effort he would keep us advised of what was going on in the world of science, of what was being done, and of what was being thought in those wide regions of knowledge over which he is accustomed to expatiate, and the Society would ask no

more. Besides at that time he had coadjutors who are not with us now, and who, if any change had been desired, would have been ready to do similar work; but when this order of things passes away, when the office falls into the hands of those who have no title to speak on such high themes—lay minds labouring with many lay things—the Society, I thought, would have to moderate its expectations, or to define its requirements—in short, supply a certain quantity of straw out of which the tale of bricks it asks for is to be fabricated.

In this state of incertitude, therefore, not knowing exactly what to do or how to do it, I began to look round the city of Bath, if not in search of the picturesque, in search of something that might fill up a quire of paper. The city is full of legends, from the days of King Bladud to the days of Beau Nash, and it is rich in literary reminiscences—it tells of Humphrey Clinker and Jane Austin, and the eccentric author of the “*Caliph Vathek*,” and many more; but the tide of fashion has ebbed away from it—and our novelists now seek their heroes and heroines in more favoured places, and I soon found that the medicated waters of Bath would not furnish much fish to my empty net, and so I had to look around to see what the neighbourhood would do. Near us was Glastonbury Abbey, boasting of its descent from Joseph of Arimathea, and claiming to be the burial place of that King Arthur whom the Laureate has given once more to fame; then, not far off—within a day’s excursion—was the birthplace of John Locke; and this attracts us, and we determine to visit it, as a spot from whence it may be possible to quarry the materials we are in search of.

We chose the route through Bristol, and turned off to Clevedon, which is not on the direct line of road, for the place has special points of interest. It was once the residence of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and it is said to be the spot on which Tennyson collected the imagery of one of his most touching ballads; the crags, and the sea, and the

ships, and the bay visible from Clevedon are said to be those depicted in the lines—

Break, break, break,
 On thy cold grey stones, O sea !
 And I would that my tongue could utter
 The thoughts that arise in me.
 O well for the fisherman's boy,
 That he shouts with his sister at play ;
 O well for the sailor lad,
 That he sings in his boat on the bay.
 And the stately ships go on
 To their haven under the hill ;
 But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
 And the sound of a voice that is still.
 Break, break, break,
 At the foot of thy crags, O sea !
 But the tender grace of a day that is dead
 Will never come back to me.

But there is something more at Clevedon, and after walking a mile or so along the shore you come suddenly upon the low-lying and secluded parish church. It stands in a hollow, close to the sea, or rather to the broad waters of the Bristol Channel, and it is the burial place of the Hallams. Henry Hallam, the historian, his wife, and children, all lie there, among them that Arthur Henry Hallam who inspired one of the noblest poems of our time and Tennyson's most characteristic and suggestive work, "In Memoriam." Of this obscure and remote church Tennyson in that work writes thus :—

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
 I know that in thy place of rest,
 By that broad water of the west,
 There comes a glory on the walls.
 Thy marble bright in dark appears,
 As slowly steals a silver flame,
 Along the letters of thy name,
 And o'er the number of thy years.
 The mystic glory swims away,
 From off my bed the moonlight dies,
 And closing eaves of wearied eyes,
 I sleep till dusk is dipped in gray.

And then I know the mist is drawn,
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church, like a ghost,
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

I thought it was something to see the same tablet, and the last resting place of a family so illustrious and so honoured.

But we had to travel several miles further to Locke's birthplace, and partly by road and partly by rail, we arrived in due time at the bright and picturesque village of Wrington, where he was born. We had no difficulty in finding the house, for the good people of the village a few years ago fixed a stone in it, upon which the fact is duly inscribed; but singularly enough they made a mistake in the date, and informed the world that Locke was born in 1637, instead of 1632. We called at the rectory to examine the register, and found, what was also remarkable, that another John Locke had been born there in 1637, and that by some accident his birth had been chronicled instead of that of his illustrious namesake. The wall of the house to which the inscription is affixed forms part of the boundary of the churchyard, and in the churchyard there lies buried with her four sisters a writer who once filled no undistinguished place in the literature of her country—Hannah More.

There are no traditions of Locke at Wrington—his father's usual residence being at Pensford, not very far off; in the hall at the rectory his name and the date of his birth—well nigh worn out—are cut on the base of a pillar that supports the roof. Having satisfied ourselves by exploring the village, we had to return and to revert to books and such other aids as were at hand, for a connected story of Locke's life, with which I determined to meet the Secretary's challenge, and, if it may be, the Society's expectations.

John Locke, then, was born at this quiet Somersetshire village of Wrington, on the 29th of August, 1632, twenty-four years after Milton and a year after Dryden, thirty-six years after Descartes and in the same year as Spinoza. Shakespeare had been dead sixteen years, and Bacon six;

Cromwell was thirty-three years old, and Hampden thirty-nine; while his own father, who, in a very humble way, was a sort of village Cromwell and village Hampden, was only twenty-four. That father was a country attorney and clerk to the Somersetshire Justices until justices of the peace were constrained to become men of war, and the justices' clerk, rather than pay the sum of 8s 9d claimed from him as ship-money in 1636, resolved to join in the fight for national liberty. As a captain of horse, the elder Locke took part in the civil war while his son was learning to write English and talk Latin—neither of which, it is said, did he ever contrive to do with perfect scholarship, though in both he was able to give very lucid utterance to the rarest wisdom and most impressive truths.

Though between law and war his father was very busy during the time of Locke's home education, he seems to have been well looked after, and the influences that surrounded him in childhood helped to fit him for the work of his later life. It is rather strange that two years before Charles I. was executed, the rebellious Somersetshire attorney should have been able to get admission for his son into Westminster School, a very hotbed of loyalty, and one in which the Monarchical party was so well able to hold its ground that, while the Parliamentarians put head masters of their own choosing in nearly every other public school, they left in undisputed control over *it* the head master appointed by King Charles. But so it was, and in 1646 young Locke went to Westminster as King's scholar. "In the worst of times," said South the divine, who entered the school a year before Locke, "we were really King's Scholars; we were not only called so." He, no doubt, thought this, but some of them may have been juvenile hypocrites. Dryden, who entered two years before Locke, may have acquired there that facility for lauding each and all of the powers that *be*, and mocking each and all of the rival powers that *were*, for which he was famous in after life, and which lessens our respect for him as a man, though it hardly weakened his strength as a poet.

But young Locke, coming to school imbued with the opinions of the Roundheads, seems to have got on among the youthful Cavaliers without either discomfort or discredit. The famous Dr. Busby, very nearly the most eminent of all English schoolmasters—the man who trained some of the foremost statesmen, poets, and philosophers of his time during sixty years, and who could boast that at one time sixteen of his pupils were together on the bishops' bench—was his schoolmaster; and under Busby he made such progress that in 1651 he was one of the lads chosen to pass from the Westminster foundation to Christ Church, Oxford.

At Oxford he came under another famous master, Dr. Fell.

“ I do not like thee, Dr. Fell—

The reason why I cannot tell.”—

Locke *could* have told the reason why, as we shall see directly. During the Commonwealth, however, he seems to have been only under Dr. Fell for a few weeks, as Dr. Fell was suspended in 1751 by the Parliamentary Commission; and during the Commonwealth he fared very comfortably at Christ Church, where the great Nonconformist, Dr. Owen, filled the office of Dean. His College companion and life-long friend Tyrrell, the historian, tells that he was there distinguished for his talents and learning; and we may readily believe it. But his studies were not all or altogether such as would have been approved of had not the Revolution left the students more than ordinarily free to choose their own pursuits. He did fairly well the routine work of the College, though regretting that it took up so much of his time that he had not enough left for special studies in philosophy, and for such instructive recreation as was to be found in general reading and in intercourse with his friends. His views on this subject were well expressed in a letter which he addressed long afterwards to the Earl of Peterborough, who had asked him to recommend a tutor for his son, and had said what sort of a tutor he wanted. “ I must beg leave to own,” wrote Locke, “ that I differ a

little from your lordship in what you propose. You would have a thorough scholar, and I think it not much matter whether he be any great scholar or no. If he but understand Latin well, and have a general scheme of sciences, I think that enough; but I would have him well-bred, well-tempered; a man that, having been conversant with the world and amongst men, would have great application in observing the humour and genius of your son, and omit nothing that might help to form his mind and dispose him to virtue, knowledge and industry. This I look upon as the great business of a tutor. This is putting life into his pupil, which, when he has got, masters of all kinds are easily to be had. For, when a young gentleman has got a relish of knowledge, the love and credit of doing well spurs him on: he will, with or without teachers, make great advances in whatever he has a mind to. Mr. Newton learnt his mathematics only of himself; and another friend of mine, Greek (wherein he is very well skilled) without a master, though both these studies seem more to require the help of a tutor than almost any other." And he says in another letter to the same nobleman: "When a man has got an entrance into any of the sciences, it will be time then to *depend on himself, and rely upon his own understanding, and exercise his own faculties, which is the only way to improvement and mastery.*"

There you have Locke's philosophy in a nutshell, the secret of his life in a sentence. Seek help from others while you are learning to walk; then depend on yourself; rely on your own understanding; exercise your own faculties—that is the way to mastery.

But in our review of Locke's life, he is still only an Oxford undergraduate, reading novels and travel-books as well as studying Descartes, and picking out all that is good from all that is not good in his philosophy, chatting and joking with his friends. Professor Burrows's "Worthies of All Souls" will show you how jovial Oxford undergraduates could be in those days. While he learns as much as he is bound to learn of the sophisms of the

schoolmen, he is looking eagerly out of his Christ Church quietude into the stormy world in which Cromwell, Milton, and such men are roughly, yet honestly, trying to solve some of the problems of practical politics. He is preparing himself for different work, but in the same direction, while he studies Tully and Puffendorf, "*De Officio Hominis et Civis, de Jure Naturali et Gentium*;" "and above all," as he says, "what the New Testament teaches, wherein a man may learn to live, which is the business of ethics, and not how to define and dispute about names of virtues and vices." "True politics," he also says, "I look on as a part of moral philosophy, which is nothing but the art of conducting men right in society."

He is doing a little more than that; he is preparing for practical work in life. What shall it be? He has no mind to go back to Somersetshire and carry on his worthy father's business as a country lawyer and clerk to the justices, for his father's fighting life is over now. Nor with scant fortune and poor health does he see his way to do much work worth doing in the political life of London. He thinks he will be a physician; at any rate, that is a good study to pursue while he remains at Oxford. So he takes his B.A. degree in 1655, and his M.A. in 1658, and then applies himself more especially to medical reading. But other work is offered to him as well, and he does it. In 1661 he is Greek lecturer at Christ Church. In 1662 he is reader in rhetoric. In 1663 and 1664 he is censor of moral philosophy; and at the close of the latter year, partly on account of his own health, he accepts an invitation from his friend Sir Walter Vane, Charles II.'s envoy to the Elector of Brandenburgh, to go with him as secretary. That detains him a year and a half, and on his return he is found to have acquitted himself so well that other and more important diplomatic employment is pressed upon him. This he declines, as, though he is fond of foreign travel and the intellectual benefits to be derived from it, he is not fond of diplomacy and its formalities and prevarications. Clerical preferment is also pressed upon

him, if he will consent to go into the Church; but this he declines yet more resolutely. He is a better Christian than most men in his day; but he has no call for the pulpit, and "divines," as he says, "are not now made, as formerly, by inspiration and on a sudden, nor learning caused by laying on of hands." Therefore he goes back to Oxford, resolved to devote himself to medicine, that science which, under the guidance of his friend Sydenham, is just beginning to grow into a real science, and is sorely in need of a few such practitioners as Locke would be. "Medicine," said Bacon, not many years before, "is a science which hath been more professed than laboured, more laboured than advanced, the labour being in my judgment more in a circle than in progression; I find much iteration, but small addition." All *that* was on the point of being revolutionised by Sydenham, whom Locke calls "one of the master builders at this time in the commonwealth of learning;" but Sydenham always regarded Locke as his master, and doubtless with truth. Locke saw, at any rate as clearly as Sydenham, the necessity of teaching a better way than what he termed "this romance-way of physic;" and we need not wonder that, in preference to diplomacy or the Church, he should have settled down, at the age of thirty-six, to be one of its teachers or, as his spiteful fellow-student, Anthony Wood, puts it, "Mr. Locke, after having gone through the usual courses preparatory to practice, entered upon the physic line, and got some business at Oxford."

Mr. Locke was "upon the physic line" for many years, though not for long at Oxford. An apparently small accident led to a change of residence, and greatly altered the current of his life, though it only opened for him broader ways of enforcing the principles from which he never swerved. In 1666 the great Lord Shaftesbury—then only Lord Ashley, but already an influential politician—went down to Oxford to consult a Dr. Thomas. Dr. Thomas, not being at home, deputed Locke to see his patient. Locke cured the ailment about which he was

consulted, and by so doing, it was considered at the time, saved Lord Ashley's life. Lord Ashley was not ungrateful, and he found it all the easier to show his gratitude because Locke's society was so very agreeable to him outside "the physic line." He soon persuaded the young Oxford doctor to become a member of his own household; leaving him free to *study* medicine as he liked, but bargaining that he should not *practise* it "out of his house, except among some of his particular friends." I need not detail to you the stages by which it came about that Locke, thus coming to be the intimate friend of one who was nearly the foremost politician—we can hardly say, statesman—of the day, exchanged the practice of medicine for other pursuits. Suffice it to say that he made the change with often-expressed regrets, until he saw that he was only in the way of doing better than he could otherwise have done the sort of work that he was resolved to do.

Except that he paid two long visits to the continent, once to go as medical companion of the Earl of Northumberland, once for the benefit of his own health, Locke was Lord Shaftesbury's constant adviser and assistant in many ways all through the most important period of his life; and he only abandoned that position in 1683, when, Shaftesbury having completely lost favour with Charles II. and the party in power, and being compelled to take refuge in Holland, Locke also thought it prudent to go abroad for safety. He was in exile for five years until the Revolution of 1688 enabled him to return to England.

Lord Shaftesbury was the life-long and warm friend of Locke; and we may be sure that he was a man possessing many great qualities, or such an enduring friendship would not have been maintained between them. Let us for a moment turn to Dryden's portrait of him in "Absalom and Achitophel." Dryden was a venial satirist, though a great poet. He accuses Shaftesbury of being false in friendship: one would like to have heard Locke's opinion on this point, and we may perhaps measure the

accuracy of the painting in other respects by its misrepresentation in this:—

Of these the false Achitophel was first ;
 A name to all succeeding ages curst.
 For close designs and crooked counsels fit ;
 Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit ;
 Restless, unfixed in principles and place,
 In power unpleas'd, impatient of disgrace ;
 A fiery soul which, working out its way,
 Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
 And o'er informed the tenement of clay ;
 A daring pilot in extremity,
 Pleas'd with the danger when the waves went high,
 He sought the storms, but for a calm unfit
 Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit.
 Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
 And thin partitions do their bounds divide,
 Else why should he, with wealth and honor blest,
 Refuse his age the needful hours of rest,
 Punish a body which he could not please,
 Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease ?

* * * * *

In friendship false, implacable in hate,
 Resolved to ruin or to rule the state,
 To compass this the triple bond he broke
 The pillars of the public safety shook ;
 Then seized with fear yet still affecting fame,
 Usurped a patriot's all atoning name.

* * * * *

Yet fame deserved no enemy can grudge
 The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge.
 In Israel's courts ne'er sat an Abethdin
 With more discerning eyes or hands more clean,
 Unbribed, unsought, the wretched to redress ;
 Swift of despatch, and easy of access.

Of all the painful incidents of this time the most galling to Locke must have been his expulsion from Oxford in 1684. I have already referred to Dr. Fell, who was Dean of Christ Church until the Roundheads displaced him. Under the Restoration he became Bishop of Oxford, and also resumed his former position as Dean of Christ Church. He seems to have always professed

great friendship for Locke, and some very affectionately worded letters of his to the young doctor are extant. But Locke had good reason for suspecting that certain underhand influences to his prejudice came from Dr. Fell; and his suspicions were afterwards confirmed. In November, 1684, King Charles caused a letter to be written to the Dean, suggesting that "one Locke, who belonged to the Earl of Shaftesbury, and had upon several occasions behaved himself very factiously against the Government, should be removed from Christ Church." Dr. Fell wrote back a letter betraying his former treachery:—"I have for divers years had an eye upon him; but so close has his guard been on himself that, after several strict inquiries, I may confidently affirm, there is not any man in the college, however familiar with him, who had heard him speak a word either against or so much as concerning the Government; and although very frequently, both in public and private, discourses have been purposely introduced to the disparagement of his master, the Earl of Shaftesbury, his party and designs, he could never be provoked to take any notice, or discover in word or look the least concern. So that I believe there is not a man in the world so much master of taciturnity and passion. He has here a physician's place, which frees him from the exercise of the college, and the obligation which others have to residence in it, and he is now abroad for want of health; but notwithstanding this, I have summoned him to return home, which is done with this prospect, that if he comes not back, he will be liable to expulsion for contumacy; and if he does, he will be answerable to the law for that which he shall be found to have done amiss. It being probable that, though he may have been thus cautious here where he knew himself suspected, he has laid himself more open at London, where a general liberty of speaking was used, and where the execrable designs against His Majesty were managed and pursued. If he don't return by the first of January, which is the time limited to him, I shall be enabled, of

course, to proceed against him to expulsion. But if this method seems not effectual or speedy enough, and His Majesty, our founder and visitor, shall please to command his immediate remove, upon the receipt thereof, directed to the dean and chapter, it shall accordingly be executed."

His Majesty straightway commanded that the seditious Locke should be "forthwith removed from his student's place, and deprived of all rights and advantages thereunto belonging;" and Dr. Fell straightway replied that "His Majesty's command for the expulsion of Mr. Locke from this college had been fully executed." Locke's prompt rejoinder to this petty persecution was his first "Letter on Toleration," the earliest printed, though by no means the first written, of his works.

After the death of King Charles II., William Penn, who had known Locke at the University, used his interest with King James to procure a pardon for him, and would have obtained it, if Locke had not answered that he had no occasion for a pardon, since he had not been guilty of any crime.

At the time of these transactions it might seem to the quiet people who were looking on that this Dean and Bishop, basking in the royal favour, and offering himself as a ready tool of a despotic Government, occupied a position more honourable and enviable than that of Locke. Posterity, however, has no difficulty in deciding which of the two was the more righteous and magnanimous man.

Soon after his return to England his greatest work, the "Essay on Human Understanding," which had been written, or at any rate begun, nearly twenty years before, was published; and other works quickly followed. Their appearance made him one of the most famous men in Europe, the friend of all the greatest and boldest thinkers of his time, the opponent of many masters of controversy. He was also—as he had been during Lord Shaftesbury's supremacy—employed in various branches of public service: but his health, always delicate, rendered it

impossible for him to remain long in London, and he found plenty to do in defending the daring views that he had put forward in his great essay, and in setting upon paper other views that he desired to make known while life remained to him. So he resided much in the country, and especially during his later years at Oates in Essex, the abode of his great friends Sir Francis and Lady Masham—Lady Masham, daughter of the celebrated Dr. Cudworth, being a woman of great abilities. From a graceful sketch written by her, giving us the best account of his character and temperament that we have, apart from the evidence of his own letters and treatises, I may quote a few sentences. “He was,” says Lady Masham, “a profound philosopher, and a man fit for the most important affairs. . . . He knew something of almost everything which can be useful to mankind, and was thoroughly master of all that he had studied; but he showed his superiority by not appearing to value himself in any way on account of his great attainments. Nobody assumed less the airs of a master, or was less dogmatical, and he was never offended when any did not agree with his opinions. . . . In the most trifling circumstances of life, as well as in speculative opinions, he was always ready to be convinced by reason, let the information come from whoever it might. He was the most faithful follower, or indeed the slave of truth, which he never abandoned on any account, and which he loved for its own sake. . . . He felt pleasure in conversing with all sorts of people, and tried to profit by their information, which arose not only from the good education he had received, but from the opinion he entertained that there was nobody from whom something useful could not be got. And indeed by this means he had learnt so many things concerning the arts and trade that he seemed to have made them his particular study; insomuch that those whose profession they were often profited by his information, and consulted him with advantage. . . . He was very charitable to the poor, provided they were not

the idle or the profligate, who did not frequent any church or who spent their Sundays in an alehouse. He felt, above all, compassion for those who having worked hard in their youth, sink into poverty in their old age. . . . Often in his walks he visited the poor of the neighbourhood, and gave them the wherewithal to relieve their wants or to buy the medicines he prescribed for them if they were sick and had no medical aid. He did not like anything to be wasted; which was, in his opinion, losing the treasure of which God has made us the economists. He himself was very regular, and kept exact accounts of everything. . . . He was kind to his servants, and showed them with gentleness how he wished to be served. He not only kept strictly a secret which had been confided to him, but he never mentioned anything which could prove injurious, although he had not been enjoined secrecy; nor did he ever wrong a friend by any sort of indiscretion or inadvertency. He was an exact observer of his word, and what he promised was sacred."

Early in the eighteenth century a young Edinburgh student, named Aikenhead, gave utterance to opinions that the rigid Presbyterians of the day regarded as atheistical; and, in spite of his protestations and contradictions, he was executed for atheism—nearly the last martyr who suffered to the death in Britain for religious opinions or the lack of them. Locke was at the time so afflicted with the asthma which had plagued him through life that he could hardly speak—so deaf that he could hardly hear; but news of this persecution reached him, and he wrote indignant letters to Edinburgh, asking for a full statement of the facts, that he might publish his judgment thereupon. He died at Oates, on the 28th of October, 1704, in his seventy-third year.

These, very briefly told, are the main incidents in the life of John Locke—a life that was comparatively uneventful, though passed in stirring and memorable times. In his early boyhood, the house-talk must have been constantly of the civil war then raging, and as a Westminster boy,

though he may not have been actually an eye-witness of Charles I.'s execution, he must have heard the shouts and groans, the trembling exultations and the muffled lamentation of the populace as they hurried up to Whitehall Palace from Westminster and Southwark on that ghastly 30th of January, 1649. Though he lived in tolerable quiet at Oxford during the Commonwealth we know that he watched the progress of affairs with great interest, and though he took but little part as a prime mover in the later events of Charles II.'s and James II.'s reigns, in the Revolution and in the establishment of William of Orange on the English throne with a new sort of kingship—a kingship in which Divine Right was ignored, and “*Vox Populi, Vox Dei*,” was the political maxim,—though, as I say, he took no prominent part in these movements, he watched them keenly, and guided them not a little. It was ill-health, as well as a natural temperament that ill-health must have strengthened, which doubtless kept him in the background; but he did better work in the background than could have been expected from him had he come to the fore as an active politician.

Happily for the world he left other men—more fitted for actual participation in the turmoil of later Stuart politics—to plan and to effect the Revolution of 1688, and to systematise all the political changes consequent upon it; while he thought out and systematised the principles that must be at the bottom of such political revolutions and social changes, as well as the guiding forces in minds that would advance the intellectual and moral development which he laboured for.

Locke was a thinker and writer for a long time before he was known by any but his most intimate friends to be anything more than a very venturesome and skilful physician and a very useful counsellor of his patron, Lord Shaftesbury, and of all others who came to him for advice. The year 1670 is given as the date at which he commenced writing his “*Essay on Human Understand-*

ing," though there is good reason for supposing that it began to be thought out, if not written, at least ten years earlier; but it was not published till 1690. In the same year appeared the "Treatise on Civil Government," the "Treatise on Education," and two "Letters on Toleration," of which we know that the first had been written in Latin as early as 1685, and had been published as a Latin treatise at Amsterdam in 1689. Another letter on "Toleration" appeared in 1692, an "Essay on the Reasonableness of Christianity" in 1695, and three letters to Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, in defence of the "Essay on Human Understanding," and some other works of less general interest complete the list.

Within the very narrow limits of space at my disposal I shall endeavour to indicate to you the most important features of Locke's teaching as he elaborated it in the principal of those works.

In a curious old manuscript volume, a sort of memorandum book belonging to Locke's father, which is now in the British Museum, a friend of mine has discovered some very interesting entries, apparently in the handwriting of Locke himself, and, if so, made by him while he was a young man at Oxford. One of them contains a concise description of philosophy. "It is sorted," he says, "into three parts, namely, Physics, Ethics, and Dialectics: Physics is to discern and judge of the world and of such things as are therein; Ethics is to treat of life and manners; Dialectics, that is Logic, to make reason to grow, and improve both Physics and Ethics, which is moral philosophy. Moral philosophy is the knowledge of precepts of all honest manners which reason acknowledgeth to belong and appertain to man's nature as the things which now differ from beasts. It is also necessary for the comely government of man's life. *Necessity was the first finder out of moral philosophy, and experience (which is a trusty teacher) was the first master thereof.*" There you have the germ of all Locke's later philosophising, whether metaphysical or ethical. His

greatest work, the "Essay on Human Understanding," grew, he tells us, out of an argument with some friends, which came to a deadlock because they could not agree on fundamental principles. "After we had awhile puzzled ourselves," he says, "without coming any nearer to a resolution of those doubts which perplexed us, it came into my thoughts that we took a *wrong course*, and that before we set ourselves upon enquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see *what objects our understandings were or were not fitted to deal with.*" The "wrong course" which Locke and his friends took in that eventful argument was doubtless one for which there was plenty of precedent. Before Locke's time, through all the dreary periods of earlier and later scholasticism, and even *in his time*, in spite of the brilliant but insufficient suggestions of Bacon and the partly-discovered and ill-interpreted truths to be found in the teaching of such men as Descartes and Hobbes, argument generally consisted merely in the hurling about of dogmas, insoluble by any human intellect, and most of which it would be considered blasphemy for any human intellect to attempt to solve. It was quite a revelation for Locke to say, "Do not attempt to use weapons that you cannot use: before you try to handle them see what is their weight, what metal they are made of, and whether you have muscle enough to grasp them, and nerve enough to guide them," or, avoiding metaphor, "Give over arguing on things you cannot understand and using so-called arguments that neither you nor your opponents understand;—instead of that, see what powers of understanding you really possess, and then what subjects you have power to argue about, what arguments you have power to use." To use Locke's own words, "When we know our own strength, we shall the better know what to undertake with hopes of success: and when we have well surveyed the powers of our own minds, and made some estimate what we may expect from them, we shall not be inclined either to sit still and not set our

thoughts on work at all, in despair of knowing anything, or, on the other side, question everything and disclaim all knowledge, because some things are not to be understood. It is of great use to the sailor to know the length of his line, though he cannot with it fathom all the depths of the ocean. It is well that he knows it is long enough to reach the bottom at such places as are necessary to direct his voyage, and caution him against running upon shoals that may ruin him. Our business here is not to know all things, but those which concern our conduct. If we can find out those measures whereby a rational creature, put in that state in which man is in this world, may and ought to govern his opinions and actions, depending thereon, we need not be troubled that some other things escape our knowledge." Most philosophers undertake to solve for us the whole secret of the universe. Locke honestly confesses that he could solve very little indeed, and bravely counsels us to sit down in quiet ignorance of those things which are beyond the reach of our capacities, and "to content ourselves with trying to know what *can* be known." That is the true philosophy—"to inquire into the origin, certainty and extent of human knowledge, together with the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion, and assent and to leave the unknowable alone." "Sure I am," he says, "that all the light we can let in upon our minds, all the acquaintance we can make with our own understandings, will not only be very pleasant, but bring us great advantage in directing our thoughts in search of other things. It is, therefore, worth while to search out the bounds between opinion and knowledge, and examine by what measures, in things whereof we have a certain knowledge, we ought to regulate our assent and moderate our persuasions." That is the scope and purport of Locke's great essay.

It would be idle for me, even if I were able, in the course of a few minutes, to lead you through the intricacies of the metaphysics contained in the essay, marvellously simple as those metaphysics are in comparison with nearly

everything that has been written before or since on the same and kindred subjects, except by John Stuart Mill; but that is not requisite. It is the object which Locke had in view and the method by which he pursued it which I wish to point out to you; and perhaps the few sentences which I have quoted will suffice for that. Amid some blunders of phrase and blunders of thought, Locke did once for all open out the true path of metaphysical research when he showed that experience is the great teacher, itself needing, like all great teachers, to be taught, and at the same time that, while the old theories about innate ideas are untenable, experience can and must solidify into a sort of intuition—or, as he puts it, that “*sense and reflection*” are the sources of all our ideas. In any impartial history it will be recorded that all the weight of authority in his own time was against Galileo, however much those who represent that authority now may seek to evade the consequences involved in the fact, and so when Locke published his “*Essay on Human Understanding*,” “it was proposed,” his biographer says, “at a meeting of the heads of the houses of the University of Oxford, to censure and discourage the reading of it, and, after various debates among themselves, it was concluded that each head of a house should endeavour to prevent its being read in his college.”

Nothing is more remarkable in the history of philosophy than the altered state of feeling which exists in the same class and rank of minds at one era and at another towards the same scientific and speculative conclusions, a fact which illustrates the wisdom of Gamaliel’s counsel, that authority had better let such dubious matters alone, for that if *not* true they will certainly come to naught, and if true they cannot be overthrown.

Dugald Stewart spoke no more than the truth when he described the *Essay* as “the richest contribution of well-observed and well-described facts which was ever bequeathed to this branch of science by a single individual, and the indisputable, though not always acknowledged,

source of some of the most refined conclusions with respect to the intellectual phenomena which have been since brought to light by succeeding inquiries." But, great as those merits are, they are not the greatest. They place Locke above all other Englishmen as a metaphysician. But he was more than a mere metaphysician. He was a seeker after truth. "Whatever I write, as soon as I shall discover it not to be truth, my hand shall be forwardest to throw it in the fire," he said, and he meant it. "It is a duty we owe to God," he wrote in his commonplace book, "as the fountain and author of all truth, who is truth itself, and it is a duty we owe also to our own selves, if we will deal candidly and sincerely with our own selves,—to have our minds constantly disposed to entertain and receive truth where-soever we meet with it, or under whatsoever appearance of plain or ordinary, strange, new, or perhaps displeasing it may come in our way. Truth is the proper object, the proper riches and furniture of the mind; and according as his stock of this is, so is the difference and value of one man above another. He that fills his head with vain notions and false opinions may have his mind perhaps puffed up and seemingly much enlarged, but in truth it is narrow and empty; for all that it comprehends, all that it contains amounts to nothing, or less than nothing, for falsehood is below ignorance, and a lie worse than nothing. Our first and great duty then is, to bring to our studies and our enquiries after knowledge a mind covetous of truth, that seeks after nothing else, and after that impartially, and embraces it, how poor, how contemptible, how unfashionable soever it may seem." And in the *Essay*:—"Vague and insignificant forms of speech and abuse of language have for so long passed for mysteries of science; and hard and misapplied words, with little or no meaning, have, by prescription, such a right to be mistaken for deep learning and height of speculation, that it will not be easy to persuade either those who speak or those who hear them that they are but the cover of ignorance and

hindrance of true knowledge. To break in upon this sanctuary of vanity and ignorance will be, I suppose, some service to the human understanding." Now you know why the "Essay on Human Understanding" was written. If you have not yet read the book, I advise you to read it at once; for the world is not yet quite rid of sanctuaries of vanity and ignorance.

If the subject be not too debatable and too dry, I may, perhaps, on some other occasion, ask your attention more particularly to the contents of Locke's Essay, by way of showing its position in reference to the speculation which preceded and to that which has followed its publication.

No one thinks now of reversing Bacon's method in reference to physics, and Locke's Essay is but an application of the same method to metaphysics; but the word "metaphysics" is not of good reputation, and is thought to represent a great deal of cloudy and unprofitable speculation. No doubt it does so; but perhaps not more than was represented by the word "physics" before Bacon's time; and when the subjects to which we apply the word "metaphysics" are treated of, according to the methods of physical science, more fruitful results will be seen, and when this comes to pass, the guiding principles of such a system will be found in Locke's Essay. In the historical order of speculation that which is subtle and abstract has preceded that which is concrete and plain, but this can hardly be called the natural order in which the subjects are in a common way presented to the understanding, for we learn the lesson of things before we learn the lesson of thoughts—we read the plan and purpose of the world that is without before we decipher the world that is within. Now, if there be but one real principle of investigation, one only true method of ascertaining and understanding what the world, in its manifold forms and modifications, means and involves, then, having learned to apply this method with success and certainty to the simplest and least occult phenomena, we may expect to

employ it with a similar success among the facts and relations which are more intricate and inaccessible; and however barren its results may hitherto have been, however it may have earned the unpopularity into which it has fallen, when its method is reformed and expurgated, metaphysics will no longer be a dreary waste or an elaborate and useless puzzle. Instead of this, it may furnish the master key of human knowledge; for, whether we know it or not, we are entangled in a web of metaphysics from which it is hard to emancipate ourselves. The language in which certain subjects are presented to us is full of metaphysical terms, and as Molière's hero had been talking prose all his life without knowing it, so unawares we may often discourse metaphysics, and we can only escape the influence of bad metaphysics by acquiring those which are better. The words of metaphysics came into existence when the methods which it pursued were visionary and unreal, and a perpetual confusion of thought is created in consequence. Metaphysics has been called a disease of language, so many of its most disputable points being due to ambiguities of words. Locke has devoted the third book of his *Essay* to the subject of words, and he confesses—"when I began this work on the understanding and a good while after, I had not the least thought that any consideration of words was at all necessary to it;" but he goes on to say—"he that shall well consider the errors and obscurity, the mistakes and confusion that are spread in the world by an ill use of words, will find some reason to doubt whether language as it has been employed has contributed more to the improvement or hindrance of knowledge amongst mankind." Now, Locke is one of the least rhetorical of writers, and his statements are always plain and guarded ones, and it is due to him that after hearing such a sweeping judgment we should read the argument that leads him to it; and a most interesting argument it is. Writers are not accustomed to employ language with a rigorous precision, they are content to use words in a

loose and slipshod way, and because this is enough for ordinary purposes we conclude that it is sufficient for *all* purposes. No mistake can be more fatal.

I called the attention of the Society some years ago to the subject of words, and I remember that some of my audience thought I had made too much of it, and that it was not necessary to insist on so much accuracy and exactness; I said then, as I say now, and as I have been taught by Locke to say, that for the ordinary commerce of life the ordinary usages of language are quite sufficient; but that for the discussion of what is more recondite and abstract, it is essential that a rigorous precision should be observed, that the words we make use of should represent definite and unmistakable things. If a man is asked how far his house is from the church or the market, he may say one hundred or two hundred yards, and the answer is reckoned sufficient; if a railway company is restricted to a charge of *1d* per mile, it must measure its distances with exactness; and if a mechanic is making a machine, he must work to a very small fraction of an inch. The progress of physical science has been immensely advanced by the perfection of its quantitative measurements; it can weigh and measure to a nicety that is almost inconceivable, and its results are proportionately valuable. The invisible and impalpable phenomena and methods of mind are also dependent upon a machinery of words; and in proportion as these become more and more precise and definite, will increased light be thrown upon the questions they deal with.

Sir John Herschel says—"Take, for instance, the word 'iron.' Different persons attach very different ideas to this word. One who has never heard of magnetism has a widely different notion of iron from one in a contrary predicament. The vulgar, who regard this metal as incombustible, and the chemist who sees it burn with the utmost fury, and who has other reasons for regarding it as one of the most combustible bodies in nature; the poet, who uses it as an emblem of rigidity, and

the smith and the engineer, in whose hands it is plastic, and moulded like wax into every form; the jailer, who prizes it as an obstruction, and the electrician, who sees in it only a channel of open communication by which that most impassable of obstacles, the air, may be traversed by his imprisoned fluid;—have all different, and all imperfect, notions of the same word. The meaning of such a term is like a rainbow—everybody sees a different one, and all maintain it to be the same. Some words are indefinite, as ‘hard’ or ‘soft,’ ‘light, or ‘heavy’ (terms which were at one time the sources of innumerable mistakes and controversies), and some exceedingly complex, as ‘man,’ ‘life,’ ‘instinct,’—and more to the same purpose. Now, if our common everyday words have in them such a width of signification, and may so far mislead, words that stand for mental and metaphysical things may have meanings quite as extensive, and far harder to define. The Archbishop of York says:—“The names we employ in speech are not always symbols to another of what is explicitly understood by us, but quite as often are symbols both to speaker and hearer, the full and exact meaning of which neither of them stop to unfold, any more than they regularly reflect that every sovereign which passes through their hands is equivalent to 240 pence. Such words as ‘state,’ ‘happiness,’ ‘liberty,’ ‘creation,’ are too pregnant with meaning for us to suppose that we realise their full sense every time we read or pronounce them.” We may not, as the Archbishop says, always use the word “sovereign” with the conscious recollection that it consists of 240 pence; but we can at any moment translate it into this equivalent, and what is wanted is that we should be able to decompose all such words into real elements. Of the meaning of the word “substance” we have a tolerably clear notion when we apply it to this table or this chair; but I turned the other day to a modern “dictionary of science, literature, and art,” to see what the word meant, and I found this account of it,—“In metaphysics and

logic *substance* is said to be only the collection or synthesis of attributes." "Attributes synthetically united give substance, and substance analysed gives attributes"—this is surely a hard saying; yet "substance" is a word that has played a conspicuous part in the metaphysical world. To speak of it more plainly, the attributes of this table may be its hardness, its tenacity, its shape, and its colour, &c.; now it is asked, if the qualities of the table, such as these and the rest, make up the table, or if there is not something besides in which these qualities inhere—a substance, in short, *plus* all the separate qualities or attributes. Is the substance the sum of the attributes, or something else? This question involves a metaphysical theory which has been grafted on some very practical matters. The word is innocent enough at one time, perplexing enough at another, but its differences of meaning are not always distinguishable, and such words are very numerous, and justify the strictures of Locke.

In this month's *Contemporary Review* Mr. Matthew Arnold seeks to determine what the word "being" means—and he says, "all one can say of it is, that it means 'being,' something which the philosophers understand but we never shall, and which explains and demonstrates all sorts of hard problems, but to philosophers only, and not to the common herd of mankind." "Philosophy," he goes on to say, "is full of the word, and some philosophies are concerned with hardly anything else; the scholastic philosophy, for instance, was one long debate about 'being' and its conditions;" and then he seeks to unlock its meaning through the etymology of the word; but he is not very successful, as these very abstract words elude our attempts to endow them with palpable and tangible meaning; what they represent cannot be made visible, it is a mental product only, the words are a sort of counters or symbols—standing for what never had or can have "a local habitation," but merely "a name."

Again, the word "idea," which fills so large a space in Locke's *Essay* that he may be considered to have

naturalised it, is ambiguous enough, and even Locke uses it very loosely; it was a word that he could hardly dispense with, and yet, as being the product of a philosophy antagonistic to his own, it should have been most carefully watched and guarded. It is a common word now, but it has upon it the mark and signature of a special theory, and it needs to be cross-examined before we admit it to much familiarity.

There is a story told of a lady who after reading Locke's Essay, was in doubt about the meaning of this word, which she pronounced *id-e-a* and upon asking a gentleman what it meant, he replied with very scant courtesy, "Madam, *id-e-a* is the feminine of *id-i-ot*."

The Essay, though not published till after the Revolution, was written during the reign of Charles II., when the degradation of England under the most contemptible of all the Stuarts seemed to offer little hope for immediate political reform. The accession of William and Mary gave rise to plenty of hope. It was partly as an apology for the deposition of James II. and the election of his son-in-law, and far more as an exposition of views greatly in advance of any that William or his advisers would support, that Locke wrote his Treatise, or rather his two Treatises, on "Civil Government." The immediate provocation for this was a book written by a Sir Robert Filmer, called "Patriarcha," with the object of proving that—Adam being endowed with kingship over all creation, and the patriarchs after him having been absolute monarchs by divine right—a special endowment with tyrannical powers had by some subtle process descended from the patriarchs to modern kings, and to English kings of the Stuart line especially, giving them authority superior to all laws and all the inclinations of their subjects. "It is hardly possible to find a more trifling and feeble work," is Hallam's verdict; and Locke confessed himself mightily surprised that, "in a book which was to provide chains for all mankind, he should find nothing but a rope of sand, useful perhaps to men whose skill and business is to

raise a dust and blind the people, the better to mislead them, but not of any force to draw those into bondage who have their eyes open, and so much sense about them as to consider that chains are but an ill wearing, how much care soever have been taken to file and polish them." Filmer's book became very popular, however, as an extreme exposition and would-be scriptural justification of unmitigated despotism, and, as such, Locke thought it worth his while to controvert it. The first half of Locke's work on "Civil Government" is an elaborate, perhaps a too elaborate, exposure of Filmer's arguments, the killing over and over again of a pigmy by a giant. The second half is a masterly exposition of Locke's own theory of Government—or, rather, of a theory of Government far older than his, though it had never before been so fully developed or supported by anything like such force of logic or such philosophical acumen. This second half of Locke's work was, for posterity, the valuable half.

Having first laid down and substantiated the broad principle that a "state of nature" is a state of perfect freedom—subject to the "law of nature," which gives no man freedom to enslave another—and a state of equality, "wherein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another," Locke proceeds to show that when men pass from the rudest condition of life into a more civilized one, and supplement natural laws by civil laws, those civil laws cannot properly be anything more than orderly developments of the primitive laws of nature. "The natural liberty of man," he says, "is to be free from any superior on earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man." "The liberty of man in society is, to be under no other legislative power but that established, by consent, in the commonwealth, nor under the dominion of any will, or restraint of any law, but what that legislative shall enact, according to the trust put in it."

Locke denies that despotic regal authority can have grown out of paternal authority, because he denies that

parents have any right to injure their children, or that any other duty devolves upon them beyond the protection and training of those children while they are too weak and foolish to fight their own battle in the world. But he is willing to believe that civil government grew—and grew properly—out of patriarchal authority. “The natural fathers of families, by an insensible change, became the politic monarchs of them too, and, as they chanced to live long, and have worthy and able heirs for several successions or otherwise, so they laid the foundations of hereditary or elective kingdoms.” But if monarchs came into fashion in this way, the way gives them no warrant at all for any abuse of their monarchical authority. They are monarchs by divine right only so long as they conform to healthy human institutions. The well-being of their subjects is the great and only object for which they are endowed with any special authority, and as soon as they cease to regard that, they surrender all title to retain the position of monarchs, and if they do not abdicate they ought to be deposed.

That is a bare outline of the central thesis in Locke’s “Treatise on Civil Government,” maintained by him with great vigour of argument and variety of illustration. There are some who still think that in it Locke undertook to prove too much, and that in showing that tyrants and despots have no right to reign, he virtually sanctions every sort of rebellion and revolution; and of course in his own day it was bitterly denounced by his political opponents as a more mischievous work than even Harrington’s “Oceana,” or Algernon Sidney’s “Discourses on Government,” the two most famous utterances of avowed Republicans of that period. I will not say that it is free from all objection on this score; but, at the utmost, it only somewhat overstates a case that surely has reason and justice altogether on its side. And, whatever may be its blemishes, it cleared the political thought of Europe of a wonderful amount of rubbish. Since his time no practical statesman, no

politician making any real claim to statesmanship, has talked seriously about the divine right of kings, or the paternal duty of monarchs to treat their subjects as slaves. The logic and the banter of Locke's treatise, reproduced by thousands who never knew that this treatise was the source of their own opinions, exploded for ever those fantastic notions; and in this very important branch of political philosophy, no less than in his more particular province of metaphysical research, Locke has effected an entire revolution.

But in some respects a more remarkable production than Locke's "Treatise on Civil Government" was his "Letter on Toleration." I say *Letter*, because, though two other letters, and one of them a very long one, were subsequently published by him, and the fragments of a fourth were included in his posthumous works, his first letter was the really important one, saying all that he really cared to say on the subject, although in the subsequent letters he was compelled, by the obtuseness of his opponents, to repeat, expand, and justify his original remarks. That first letter was written, as I have already observed, in Holland, while Locke was a fugitive from the persecution of Charles II.'s later minions, and was being hunted about even in Holland by the Dutch allies of the English politicians then in power. A more manly, dignified, and eloquent protest in favour of religious liberty could not have been penned.

A great deal, of course, had been written in favour of religious liberty long before Locke's time; but, unfortunately, there was considerable confusion in the use of the term. You remember that Milton, after hoping much from the substitution of Presbyterian supremacy for the Church government of Archbishop Laud and his sacerdotal party, had sadly to confess that "new presbyter is but old priest writ large,"—and so it had been all through. The first Protestants rightly complained of the way in which they were persecuted by the Catholics; but, as soon as they had made sure their own position, they

began to persecute one another. Each sect and party began by claiming the right of worshipping as it chose, and then claimed the right of preventing other sects or parties from worshipping in any other way. The best men of course were more truly tolerant; and a few of them—the most notable of all being Milton—wrote and published their views. Some while after Milton, Jeremy Taylor issued his “Liberty of Propheying”—a book worthy of high praise, though somewhat narrow and self-contradictory. But it was reserved for Locke to propound this unqualified proposition: “All the power of Civil Governments relates only to men’s civil interests,—is confined to this world; and hath nothing to do with the world to come.”

It was to the lucid exposition of that doctrine that Locke applied himself in his letters on Toleration. His theory of civil Government made this easier for him. Holding that governments only exist to secure and strengthen the rights and liberties of the individuals who voluntarily submit themselves to those Governments, he was only logical—and he was always logical—in excluding religious opinion from the sphere of government. Religious *action*, within certain limits, he did not thus exclude. “If a number of men conspire,” he might have said, “to commit a murder, it is the duty of the Civil Government to find them out and punish them, and they certainly ought not to be exempt from restraint by the Civil Government, because they profess that what they do is under guidance from heaven. Papistical incendiaries who plot and scheme for the restoration of James III., and who use the instruments of their religion to coerce their devotees, deserve at least as much interference and restraint as would be used in the case of other schemers and plotters who wear no cloak of religion; and the same rule must apply to all religious incendiaries.” But he went no further than that. Provided they did not attempt positive subversion of the civil interests of the State, he urged that religionists of all sorts should have perfect

liberty to think and act as they chose. "God," he declared, "has never given any such authority to one man over another as to compel any one to his religion; nor can any such power be vested in the magistrate by the consent of the people, because no man can so far abandon the care of his own salvation as blindly to leave it to the choice of any other, whether prince or subject, to prescribe to him what faith or worship he shall embrace." Again, "The care of souls cannot belong to the civil magistrate, because his power consists only in outward force; but true and saving religion consists in the inward persuasion of the mind, without which nothing can be acceptable to God. And such is the nature of the understanding that it cannot be compelled to the belief of anything by outward force. Confiscation of estates, imprisonment, torments, nothing of that nature can have any such efficacy as to make men change the inward judgment that they have formed of things." Again, "The care of the salvation of men's souls cannot belong to the magistrate, because though the vigour of laws and the force of penalties were capable to convince and change men's minds, yet would not that help at all to the salvation of their souls. For—there being but one truth, one way to heaven—what hope is there that more men would be led into it, if they had no rule but the religion of the Court, and were put under a necessity to quit the light of their own reason, and oppose the dictates of their own consciences, and blindly to resign themselves to the will of their governors, and to the religion which either ignorance, ambition, or superstition had chanced to establish in the countries where they are born? In the variety and contradiction of opinions in religion, wherein the princes of the world are as much divided as in their secular interests, the narrow way would be much straightened, one country alone would be in the right, and all the rest of the world put under an obligation of following their princes in the ways that lead to destruction, and—that which heightens the absurdity, and very ill suits the

notion of a Deity—men would owe their eternal happiness or misery to the places of their nativity.”

Those sentences will help to show you what was the nature of Locke's argument in favour of Toleration. It very nearly exhausted the subject, and, if men were governed by reason, it would have rung the death-knell of every sort of religious persecution. As it is, we may be grateful to John Locke for having done so much to secure liberty of conscience. It is not easy to put oneself at the point of view of those who took part in a great and exciting controversy of former times; arguments which were then reckoned good and effective seem now to have lost their relevancy, and we often miss the meaning for want of knowing what was said on the other side. Locke's argument, as I read it, refers exclusively to the coercive jurisdiction of the magistrate; which he restricts absolutely to the affairs of this world; what a man *does* which is injurious to the State he may justly be punished for, what he *thinks* is not within the province of the magistrate's punitive power at all. This doctrine is hardly disputed now in the civilised world, and one is amazed to read what was written in Locke's time on the other side of the question.

It was for the special benefit of his friend Edward Chipley, in the management of his children, that Locke wrote "Some Thoughts concerning Education," but the treatise is of great general value, and especially worth reading in these days of educational reform. Its main purpose is to show the extreme importance of training the body and the heart as well as the intellect; and the greater use with which the mind can be developed if, conjointly with the intellectual training, due attention is paid to physical education and to strengthening of all these qualities which go to the making of a *gentleman*, in the true sense of that term. But Locke's remarks on the scope and method of actual school-teaching of classics and mathematics, and all the other *ics* and *ologies* and *osophies*, if now and then rather old-fashioned and out-of-date, are

remarkably sensible. As an illustration, not so much of the tenor of the book, as of Locke's very matter-of-fact temperament, and of some social and scholastic tendencies of the time, which helped to make him so matter-of-fact, I may quote to you part of one paragraph in this work.

Locke has been ridiculing the habit of the schoolmasters of his day who made their boys spend the best part of their early years in learning Latin and acquiring a certain sort of skill in uttering Latin orations and writing Latin essays. "If," he continues, "there may be any reasons against children's making Latin themes at school, I have much more to say, and of more weight, against their making verses—verses of any sort. For, if he has no genius to poetry, 'tis the most unreasonable thing in the world to torment a child and waste his time about that which can never succeed: and, if he *have* a poetic view, 'tis to me the strangest thing in the world that the father should desire or suffer it to be cherished or improved. Methinks the parents should labour to have it stifled and suppressed as much as may be; and I know not what reason a father can have to wish his son a poet who does not desire to have him bid defiance to all other callings and business. Which is not yet the worst of the case; for, if he proves a successful rhymers, and get once the reputation of a wit, I desire it may be considered what company and places he is likely to spend his time in—nay, and estate too. For it is very seldom seen that any one discovers mines of gold or silver in Parnassus. 'Tis a pleasant air, but a barren soil; and there are very few instances of those who have added to their patrimony by anything they have reaped from thence. Poetry and gaming, which usually go together, are alike in this too, that they seldom bring any advantage but to those who have nothing else to live on. Men of estates almost constantly go away losers; and 'tis well if they escape at a cheaper rate than their whole estates or the greatest part of them. If, therefore, you would not have your son the fiddle to every jovial company, without whom the

sparks could not relish their wine, nor know how to pass an afternoon idly—if you would not have him waste his time and estate to divert others, and continue the dirty acres left him by his ancestors—I do not think you will much care he should be a poet, or that his schoolmaster should enter him in versifying. But yet, if any one will think poetry a desirable quality in his son, and that the study of it would raise his fancy and parts, he must yet confess that to that end reading the excellent Greek and Roman poets is of more use than making bad verses of his own in a language that is not his own.”

Amongst other public matters to which Locke devoted himself should be noticed the state of the coinage, which by clipping and abrasion had lost one-third of its value. It was an old device of government to reduce the quantity of metal and to leave it of the same nominal value. This had not been done by public authority in Locke’s time, but the effect was the same, and it led to such disorder that Parliament at last took the matter into its most serious consideration; and to assist the men at the head of affairs who, as Locke’s biographer says, are not always the best judges of such matters, Locke published a little treatise entitled “Some Considerations of the Lowering of the Interest and Raising the Value of Money,” in which there are many nice and curious observations on both these subjects, as well as on trade in general. This treatise was shortly followed by two more on the same subject, of which the same biographer says, “He fully showed to the world by these discourses, that he was able to reason on trade and business, as on the most abstract parts of science; and that he was none of those philosophers who spend their lives in search of truths merely speculative, and who by their ignorance of those things which concern the public good, are incapable of serving their country. These writings commended him to the notice of the greatest persons, with whom he used to converse very freely.”

We may notice another little incident in Locke’s history,

as it shows the conscientious manner in which he applied his principles to the conduct of life. So scrupulous a regard as his to the claims of right when they come into collision with the magnetic influence of money, has been in all times and amongst all classes conspicuously rare. His biographer says, "In 1695 Mr. Locke was appointed one of the commissioners of trade and plantations, a place worth £1000 per annum. The duties of this post he discharged with much care and diligence, and with universal approbation. He continued in it till the year 1700, when upon the increase of his asthmatic disorder, he was forced to resign it. He acquainted no one with his design of leaving that place till he had given up his commission into the king's own hand. The king was very unwilling to dismiss him, and told our author that he would be well pleased with his continuance in that office, though he should give little or no attendance, for that he did not desire him to stay in town one day to the hurt of his health. But Mr. Locke told the king that he could not in conscience hold a place to which such a salary was annexed without discharging the duties of it, and therefore he begged leave to resign it. King William had a great esteem for Locke, and would sometimes send for him to discourse on public affairs, and to know his sentiment of things."

Such, then, was John Locke, a man of whom the least that can be said is, that he was a truly noble and patriotic Englishman; we may differ from him in many matters of opinion, but we cannot fail to recognise in him high and commanding qualities, of which his country may justly be proud. Living, when the passions of the great revolution were at their height, it would have been wonderful if he had escaped their influence. A political partisan, mixed up with the fiercest of political contests, we must not be surprised if we find in his works some of the hard words that such contests bring forth. He saw with his own eyes the evil doings of that despotic rule which brought on a civil war; he lived through the

conflict, and until the days of a restoration which ended by restoring the arbitrary ways and more than the follies of the past ; he lived amid commotion and strife ; his political writings were the offspring of stormy times, and they bear the impress and colour of their origin. But where we may dissent from his conclusions, we must always respect his fairness of mind and manliness of character. He was not driven into violent counsels by the fantastic theories of fifth monarchy men, nor by the fatuity of the champions of Divine right. The strange theories of government that were put forward as an apology for the arbitrary proceedings of the time led him to investigate the subject in its first principles ; and though some part of what he wrote may be only of temporary interest, the much larger part is of permanent and enduring worth, which experience, indeed, may temper and modify, but will never reverse.

Returning for a moment to our introductory remarks, we extended our journey from Bath to Torbay, and could not but remember that in Locke's time when William III. landed there, he found only bare hills and a few fishermen's huts upon an open strand, where to-day there are to be seen upon the wooded slopes, innumerable villas and gardens, a prosperous and populous town, and a sheltered haven ; and the transformation is not without its moral. That our country during the two centuries which have since elapsed has made vast progress, both moral and material, that it is not now torn and distracted like France and Spain by contending factions, that its internal discords since those days have been left to the arbitrament of *words* and not *swords*, is unquestionably due to the teaching, the personal bearing, and influence of such men as John Locke. Wordsworth says—

' Great men have been among us ; hands that penned
And tongues that uttered wisdom—better none.
The later Sidney, Marvel, Harrington,
Young Vane, and others who called Milton friend,
These moralists could act and comprehend ;
They knew how genuine glory was put on ;

Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
In splendour ; what strength was, that would not bend
But in magnanimous weakness. France, 'tis strange,
Has brought forth no such souls as we had then.
Perpetual emptiness ; unceasing change !
No single volume paramount ; no code ;
No master spirit ; no determined road ;
But equally a want of books and men !'

We may care nothing for the political speculations of the moralists thus enumerated by Wordsworth, and with whom Locke might very well have been classed, but we remember that they took a generous view of human nature, and had a genuine sympathy with its wants and sorrows. Beyond this domain of politics, however, there lies a region whose frontier is even now somewhat ill-defined—the region of a man's own personal opinions and beliefs. In Locke's time, as we have seen, Jeremy Taylor's appeal for the "Liberty of Propheying" had been made, and Milton's "Areopagitica"—"a speech," as he calls it, "for the liberty of unlicensed printing to the Parliament of England"—had also been heard, and yet real toleration was neither liked nor understood. Eminent Presbyterians, like Calamy, preaching before the Long Parliament, denounced toleration as the last stronghold of Satan, and while Owen took the lead among a noble few in urging upon Cromwell and his party the wisdom of allowing at any rate some liberty of conscience, treatises without number were written against any such ruinous folly. John Edwards, a very respectable Puritan divine, for example, used these words in his "Gangrena":—"A toleration is the grand design of the devil—his masterpiece and chief engine he works by at this time, to uphold his tottering kingdom. It is the most compendious, ready, sure way to destroy all religion, lay all waste and bring in all evil. It is the most transcendent, catholic and universal evil for this kingdom of any that can be imagined. As the original sin is the most fundamental sin, having the seed and spawn of all in it, so a toleration has all errors in it and all evils. It is against the whole

stream and current of Scripture both in the Old and New Testament ; both in matters of faith and manners ; both general and particular commands. It overthrows all relations, political, ecclesiastical, and economical. And whereas other evils, whether of judgment or practice, be but against some one or two places of Scripture, this is against all—this is the Abaddon, Apollyon, the destroyer of all religion, the abomination of desolation and astonishment, the liberty of perdition, and, therefore, the devil follows it night and day, working mightily in many by writing books and other ways—all the devils in hell and their instruments being at work to promote a toleration.” The strong breeze of Locke’s logic was needed to clear the air from such a miasma as this. There had been a fierce cry for political freedom, but individual liberty of thought and speech had few adherents. It is never easy to draw hard and fast lines on such a subject with a due regard to the conflicting interests that have to be provided for. We may even yet ask how much of the individual belongs to the community and how much to himself, and how far does the penal jurisdiction of society extend over a member who may happen to move in an orbit that is slightly eccentric ? The question is a delicate one—apart altogether from law—for there is some presumption at least on the side of the majority ; but Locke came forward as the champion of the few and the feeble against the domination of the many and the strong ; and notwithstanding that the many and the strong asserted with an uncompromising vehemence that they were also exclusively the right and the good—a claim which he knew had been frequently made, and not unfrequently falsified in the actual working of the world’s affairs.

Locke’s philosophy has been challenged as tending to materialism. Bishop Berkeley, however, derived from it his system of idealism, so that we may set off the one system against the other. But with neither of them is Locke to be identified. He was a man of so much integrity and fearlessness of mind that when he held a

distinct opinion he would distinctly avow it. Conclusions may be deduced from his language which would have been far from his real meaning. He had to rebuild from the foundation; and it need not surprise us if criticism, hostile and friendly, has discovered that some of his materials are not weatherproof, and that his lines are not all straight and square. But if his critics have found defects in his workmanship, and have shown that with his singlehanded strength he did not make complete the whole of what he undertook, they are indebted to him for the methods by which they have corrected him; and if he has been worsted in conflict, the weapons have been forged in his own armoury. "He nursed the pinion that impelled the steel."

In making war upon the old philosophy Locke did not merely overthrow; he built, and re-organized, and he took human nature as he found it, discarding mere conjecture; he dealt with it by the method of observation and experiment, keeping the highway that Bacon had cast up, and avoiding the "high priori road." What might be the conclusions of mere abstract speculation apart from experience he did not care to inquire. His philosophy was of a practical sort, having for its basis the facts of life and history, as they respectively illuminate each other; and he did not confound proof with probability; his judgment waited for evidence and he gave full weight to the just claims of authority. The habits and teachings, however, acquired in the region of proof he carried with him into the region of probability, and he carefully adjusted the measure and quality of his assent to the quantity and character of the probabilities that were afforded to it. I have already referred to a work which he wrote, the full title of which is "On the Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures;" and it is worth noting in these days, when there is a destructive criticism abroad which, like a potent acid, dissolves the richest pearls, that such a man as Locke, whose equal is not to be found in our generation, did not despair of the great common-

wealth of man, and, further, that he found reason for the hope which he held. He knew both the strength and the weakness of the position which men had fortified against their doubts and their fears, and though he might feel that it was not exactly impregnable all round, he deliberately believed that it was capable of defence. He had "told the towers" and "marked the bulwarks," and he certified that they were trustworthy and tenable.

As a philosopher, he undertook to answer certain questions, to solve certain difficulties, and to interpret certain phenomena; and he did well, in his sober way, to disregard the frowns and the obloquy he incurred by pursuing his inquiry without fear of the results. When he was told that his reasonings clashed with some authority, he asked to see the title deeds of the authority, or to have his reasonings invalidated; but he did not recognise a right in one province of knowledge to interdict or to limit inquiry in another; he sought to ascertain the range and extent of man's present powers; and while he kept himself within these, he knew that he was safe; he followed the physical method, yet he did not surrender to physics the whole realm of philosophy, and he did not yield to philosophy the whole empire of man. Nevertheless, it was from the data of experience that he gathered whatever gave form and colour and consistency to his highest hopes and fears and aspirations, and from the dim twilight of the understanding and the reason he penetrated to

The light that never was on sea or land.

If he traced our knowledge to its source, he did not pretend to determine its boundary or its goal; if he proved that it gushed forth at first through the channel of a mere sensation, he tracked it also through its manifold and mysterious windings, to the highest promontories and pinnacles of thought, where it mingles and blends with the immeasurable that is beyond.

ON LOCKE'S "ESSAY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING."

AFTER partaking of the highly seasoned dainties provided for us by our President at the last meeting, I felt somewhat reluctant to put upon the table on the next occasion merely a plain dish, without embellishment and without spices or condiments. I mentioned my difficulty to the Honorary Secretary; but obtained no sympathy from him. He said at once that he could not, under any circumstances, prescribe or recommend whipped cream as an ordinary article of diet, and, therefore, that the palate of the Society must accommodate itself to what was less stimulating; in fact, it seemed to me that he would not be at all displeased or dissatisfied though now and then—

On hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden grey and a' that.

And this being the case, I returned to my unseasoned cookery, and went on with the composition which the Honorary Secretary had previously bargained for. If you find it much less pleasant both to masticate and to digest than its predecessor, I shelter myself behind the broad shield of the Honorary Secretary, and announce, as is done on many other occasions, that the entertainment is under his special patronage; that the drugs and medicaments with which the preparation is freely compounded, are administered with his approbation, as tonics and astringents, to brace up the very relaxed state of intellectual fibre which our President, in his opening address, so loudly complained of; and I should

not tell the whole truth if I did not acknowledge that I came pretty much to the same conclusion myself. I was, indeed, afraid that my subject was a somewhat uninviting one; but then I remembered that we were a Literary and Philosophical Society, and ought not to turn our backs upon a subject because it was in some degree abstruse. I am ready to apologise for all men in these high pressure times who find it needful to amuse and enliven themselves in the regions of light literature; but even here an occasional variety is not altogether disagreeable.

From grave to gay, from lively to severe.

And on making this experiment to-night, I shall not be greatly disappointed if it turns out that I have taken up a subject which no skill of mine can make interesting; but I shall feel that the fault lies with the artificer, and I shall not the less consider that in itself the theme is one which may fairly occupy the attention of a society like ours, if only there be leisure and light to handle it properly.

Last Session I read a paper on "Locke's Life and Writings," and I intimated that on some future occasion I might call your attention more particularly to that work of his by which he is most extensively known in English literature—his "Essay concerning Human Understanding." If I am asked why I choose a subject which I admit to be somewhat abstract and dry, and which requires for its proper handling more literary skill than I possess, I answer, that my own reading has lain a good deal in this direction, and that when we established this Society we did not calculate upon or expect much originality, but we agreed that whatever each one of us met with which was interesting to himself he should endeavour to communicate to his fellow-members. What I have, therefore, to read to you now will embody nothing original, but will reproduce, more or less exactly, as I have understood it well or ill, what

I have gathered up as I have gone along in connection with a subject which possesses for many a profound interest. A Literary and Philosophical Society should cure us, in some degree, of mere narrowness of mind. Each one of us is, perhaps, too much absorbed in his own pursuits. We meet here that we may take an interest in and understand the pursuits of others; and for my own part, I do most reluctantly and unwillingly occupy your time, as I would much rather that the rising generation should speak, and tell us what they know and what they think of the world and its ways, its order and constitution. Ostensibly we all come here to learn; and by our presence we all of us say that our education is incomplete; that by some chance or other we may happen to be burdened with ignorance and prejudice, which it would be well for us to get rid of. We come here, according to our charter and constitution, not to be inert listeners, but to inquire, to discuss, and to review what hitherto we may have taken for granted. It has been said that the first lesson in controversy is to unlearn our native tendency to treat our adversaries as fools. If we learn this lesson, and try to seize the aspect of the truth which presents itself to their minds, we may find that this aspect which represents their experience represents our own also, that the points of difference are reducible to difference in the data leading to errors of interpretation.

Locke's "Essay Concerning Human Understanding" is one of the masterpieces of English literature. Therefore, it is a work that every educated Englishman ought to be acquainted with. It is, moreover, one of those works which marks an epoch and an era in the history of a great and absorbing question; and therefore it is one deserving of a careful study. Though we find metaphysical speculation in its crude form distasteful to us, we cannot altogether escape its influence, and we are not to measure questions by their immediate results—by the large or small number of men who have been occupied about them, or by the amount which they have contri-

buted to the exchanges or the markets of the world. Man does not live by bread alone. If, says the Archbishop of York, it be asked what is the use of logic, what fruit does it bring? and if the question means what material wants does it supply, what comforts does it furnish to humanity? the question is a base, sordid, and stupid one, against which every better mind indignantly protests. The "Essay Concerning Human Understanding" is classed with metaphysical works, and these have no good reputation; indeed, it has been said that when a man is talking about what he does not understand, to a person who does not understand what he is talking about, he is talking metaphysics. It is to be hoped we may escape this catastrophe. Because men have written cloudily and obscurely upon a topic, it is not always to be inferred that the topic is itself unintelligible; rather, it may happen that the writers have followed a wrong method or have been themselves wanting in the faculty of clear exposition. A subject may inherently involve difficult problems, the solution of which may be impracticable with the materials at present in hand; and yet it may be impossible, and altogether undesirable, to restrain the spirit of speculation and inquiry from investigating such subjects, for they present questions to which a certain class of minds are irresistibly drawn. Though for generations none may solve them, or arrive at the goal they are seeking, yet the explorers may open many glowing prospects by the way, and lift up their fellow-traveller above the petty claims and pursuits which are daily pressing upon him. Nations that are absorbed by lower and merely material interests seldom achieve much in the world, or the greatness they attain to quickly passes away and leaves little fruit.

Oxford has recently published an edition of David Hume's works, and the editors have contributed elaborate introductory essays and criticisms, from which I make the following extracts:—"There is a view of the history of mankind, by this time familiarised to Englishmen, which detaches from the chaos of events a connected series of

ruling actions and beliefs—the achievements of great men and great epochs, and assigns to these in a special sense the term ‘historical.’ According to this theory—which, indeed, if there is to be a theory of History at all, alone gives the needful simplification—the mass of nations must be regarded as left in swamps and shallows outside the main stream of human development. They have either never come within the reach of the hopes and institutions which make history a progress instead of a cycle, or they have stiffened these into a dead body of ceremony and caste, or at some great epoch they have failed to discern the signs of the times, and rejected the counsel of God against themselves. Thus permanently or for generations, with no principle of emotion but unsatisfied want, without the assimilative ideas which from the strife of passions elicit moral results, they have trodden the old round of war, trade, and faction, adding nothing to the spiritual heritage of man. It would seem that the historian need not trouble himself with them, except so far as relation to them determines the activity of the progressive nations.”

“A corresponding theory may with some confidence be applied to simplify the history of philosophical opinion. The common plan of seeking this history in compendia of the systems of philosophical writers, taken in the gross or with no discrimination, except in regard to some popularity, is mainly to blame for the common notion that metaphysical inquiry is an endless process of thrashing old straw. Such inquiry is really progressive, and has a real history, but it is a history represented by a few great names. At rare epochs, there appear men or sets of men with the true speculative impulse to begin at the beginning and go to the end, and with the faculty of discerning the true point of departure, which previous speculation has fixed for them. To the historian of literature a philosopher is interesting, if at all, on account of the personal qualities which make a great writer, and have a permanent effect on letters and general culture.

Locke and Hume had undoubtedly these qualities, and produced such an effect, an effect in Locke's case more intense upon the immediately following generation, but in Hume's more remarkable, as having re-appeared after near a century of apparent forgetfulness."

It may seem a small matter in reference to so large a subject as Locke's *Essay*, to remark that the title of the work is very seldom given with accuracy. I have consulted many books in connection with this work, and I have more often found the title given inexactly than the contrary; and, considering the class of writers who have handled the subject, this is a little remarkable. The true title of the book is an "Essay Concerning Human Understanding"—whereas it is by most writers referred to as "Locke's *Essay on the Understanding*." My copy is so lettered on the back, though the other words are in the title-page. An "Essay Concerning Human Understanding" is one thing, and an "Essay on the Human Understanding" is another. How we understand, how we get at our knowledge, and what is meant by the human understanding, are matters that cannot be kept separate; yet there is a distinction, and as Locke has deliberately chosen a specific name for his work, his commentators and critics might be expected to adhere to it.

The first inquiry that presents itself in taking up such a book as Locke's is this—What is the question which he proposes to answer?—what is the problem he seeks to solve? And Locke, being free from all manner of mystification, puts the clue into our hands at once. A very brilliant and acute writer some few years ago contributed a work to our literature which he called "Institutes of Metaphysic, or the Theory of Knowing and Being"; and he professes to lay down the laws which must necessarily bind all intelligence in whatever part of this wide universe it may exist. Assuming that there are everywhere objects to be known, and intelligence to know them, there are, he alleges, certain conditions involved which must govern and regulate these things

everywhere and always. Locke was not so ambitious or aspiring, he did not pretend to know what was possible in the universe, he confined his investigation to the state of things existing on this globe. Prefixed to the Essay is an epistle to the reader, in which he says: "Were it fit to trouble thee with a history of this Essay, I should tell thee that five or six friends meeting at my chamber, and discoursing on a subject very remote from this, found themselves quickly at a stand by the difficulties that rose on every side. After we had awhile puzzled ourselves, without coming any nearer a resolution of those doubts which perplexed us, it came into my thoughts that we took a wrong course, and that before we set ourselves upon inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see what objects our understandings were, or were not, fitted to deal with. This I proposed to the company, who all readily assented; and thereupon it was agreed that this should be our first inquiry. Some hasty and undigested thoughts on a subject I had never before considered, which I set down against our next meeting, gave the first entrance into this discourse; which, having been thus begun by chance, was continued by entreaty; written by incoherent parcels; and after long intervals of neglect, resumed again, as my humour or occasion permitted; and at last, in a retirement, where an attendance on my health gave me leisure, it was brought into that order thou now seest it."

In the second paragraph of the work he tells us that his purpose is "to inquire into the original, certainty and extent of human knowledge, and it is most important to bear in mind this limitation of his inquiry—to have it continually before us as the object to which the investigation is directed—"the original, certainty and extent of human knowledge." But then we are stopped at this frontier, and it is immediately demanded of us what we mean by knowledge. It seems a

simple enough word, but it has given rise to no little contention, and people who have spoken of knowledge, and of what they knew, have often meant in reality only what they believed or conjectured. Whately, in his *Logic* says—"Knowledge implies three things: 1st, firm belief; 2nd, of what is true; 3rd, on sufficient grounds. If anyone *e.g.* is in doubt respecting one of Euclid's demonstrations, he cannot be said to know the proposition proved by it; if, again, he is fully convinced of anything that is not true, he is mistaken in supposing himself to know it; lastly, if two persons are each fully confident, one, that the moon is inhabited, and the other that it is not (though one of these opinions must be true), neither of them can properly be said to know the truth, since he cannot have sufficient proof of it." Now, with all respect for Archbishop Whately, this seems to me a confused and unsatisfactory account of the matter; for belief and inference and evidence are all compounded together to make up knowledge. Tennyson says — and poets often have an insight that leads them into the light, whilst the rest of the world is in the dark—

We have but faith; we cannot know;
 For knowledge is of things we see
 And yet we trust it comes from Thee
 A beam in darkness—let it grow.

And elsewhere he says—

Behold! we know not anything,
 I can but trust that good shall fall
 At last—far off—at last, to all,
 And every winter change to spring.
 So runs my dream—but what am I?
 An infant crying in the night,
 An infant crying for the light,
 And with no language but a cry.

In a certain sense what Tennyson says in this last extract is true. Carrying the word knowledge up to some high ideal, we may say truly

Behold, we know not anything.

But coming down to the level of common practical things, we adopt his first definition, and say,

Knowledge is of things we see.

We are here to some extent anticipating the discussion which Locke introduces later on, but I do not attempt to follow the order of his work. When we are seeking to understand anything we usually apply ourselves in the first instance to the simplest and plainest examples—and we will do so on this occasion. Now, if our president had a man in the witness-box, and asked him what he knew about the matter in hand, he would have a very distinct notion of what he meant by that question, and if the witness began to tell him what he believed, he would stop him, and tell him to confine himself to what he knew, adding, probably in the somewhat cumbrous phraseology of the law—of his own knowledge—what he knew of his own knowledge—and our president would not be long in making the witness comprehend a distinction which seems to have puzzled Archbishop Whately, and even greater men than he. In high regions of speculation, where human lungs can scarcely respire, we may exclaim with the poet,

Behold, we know not anything.

But in matters involving the largest worldly interests, in issues of life and death, we follow a different rule, and we presume to think that we know a great deal, and we act accordingly; and what is the ground of this presumption? Probably the most scientific piece of legislation known to modern English law is the Indian Evidence Act of 1872, and I will quote from it three paragraphs bearing upon the question before us—

“Oral evidence must in all cases whatever be direct. That is to say,

“If it refers to a fact which could be seen, it must be the evidence of a witness who says he saw it.

“If it refers to a fact which could be heard, it must be the evidence of a witness who says he heard it.

“If it refers to a fact which could be perceived by any other sense or in any other manner, it must be the evidence of a witness who says he perceived it by that sense or in that manner.”

We dispose of men's property and lives by knowledge derived from these sources, and we do it with the utmost confidence; we know, then, by the evidence of our senses. What would our president say if he encountered in the witness-box a man who, in response to some question as to what he had seen or heard, should solemnly declare—“Behold, we know not anything”? And yet this is the temper of mind that has been manifested by some schools of metaphysics.

Let us take another example from the unsophisticated region of common life. We read in the New Testament these words: “The sheep follow Him, for they know His voice”—a dog or a horse, and other domesticated animals, also know the voices they are accustomed to—if it be said this is instinctive knowledge, I ask in what respect it differs from the knowledge an infant has of the voices and faces it hears and sees? And what is the distinction between this instinctive knowledge and such other knowledge as we designate differently? Perhaps, we may call the other rational knowledge, for to know is to be aware of relations, felt or perceived.

But let us for a moment consider further this matter of instinctive knowledge—the knowledge of an animal having senses like our own. A dog knows its master, and so does a horse. No other word in our language expresses or explains the action of a dog or horse except the word “knowledge.” They know the voice, habits, and ways of those with whom they have continually associated. There are hundreds of anecdotes showing what we call the sagacity of dogs: sagacity being a word that primarily meant keenness of smell, and having subsequently been applied to quick apprehension generally. A disposition has existed not to apply to

the intelligence of the animal creation the same words as those by which we designate human intelligence; nevertheless, words do not alter the nature of things; and however we may disguise it by difference of language, in its essential character the intelligence of animals—their knowledge—have the same marks and origin as that of man; its range is less, and there are regions into which it does not reach; but as an intuitional adaptation of means to ends they are of the same order.

An anecdote that Lockhart tells of Sir Walter Scott's dog Camp is not so remarkable as many others, but it has peculiar features which make it suit our present purpose. "As the servant was laying the cloth for dinner he would address the dog, lying on his mat by the fire, and say, 'Camp, my good fellow, the Sheriff's coming home by the ford' (or by the hill, as the case might be), and the sick animal would immediately bestir himself to welcome his master, going out at the back door or the front door, according to the direction given, and advancing as far as he was able." The dog knew not only his own name but that his master was called the Sheriff, and he knew the objects to which the words "ford" and "hill" were applied; he shows this by his actions, the clearest proof of knowledge that can be given. The peculiar knowledge, however, indicated by the word "Sheriff" he could not possess; the social and legal relations that belonged to his master were things the nature of which he could not know. The lawyer of the district, we may assume, knew them all: knew that the Sheriff had property, and knew all the complex apparatus of relations that belonged to it—knew their origin and knew their history; he knew, also, all the varied ramifications of the Sheriff's social relations and multitudes of other things which were part and parcel of the Sheriff's surroundings, of which the dog could have no glimmering of knowledge. The village doctor knew the Sheriff's bodily constitution—knew it anatomically and physiologically; knew that he had certain

tendencies and habits, which were influenced by certain modes of treatment; knew that his children inherited special points of strength and weakness derived from their parents, and beyond this he knew much of the Sheriff's physical organisation; but it is still the same Sheriff known to the dog. The parson of the parish might have a knowledge of the Sheriff differing from that possessed by the lawyer and the doctor; he might know that he was passionate and perverse, or that he was loving and generous, and that he made efforts to correct his errors and improve his disposition; but if he had been asked under what conditions and circumstances, with what feelings and thoughts, amid what aspects and surroundings, he would exist in the hereafter,—

Where, beyond these voices, there is peace;

he would have said, "Behold, we know not anything!" and comparing the vast unknown with the mere fragment which we know, the exclamation, as we said before, would be both appropriate and true. The knowledge which thus clustered round this one person—the Sheriff—seems to be, in a manner, inexhaustible. But its origin is simple, and the first steps of it are in their nature identical. The knowledge of each one of the human agents we have summoned is circumscribed, and though it is more comprehensive and special than that of the dog, it is reducible to the same elements. It begins with the senses, but it has an almost infinite expansiveness, and travels far beyond the region of sight and sense, though it must always, in the last analysis, submit to methods of verification required by sight and sense. What we call a proper name is a name given to some person or thing to distinguish it from others; but it is not given on account of any quality possessed by it. John or James may be the name of hundreds of people who differ from one another in innumerable ways, and the name John or James gives us no information about them except

perhaps that of sex. Now this sort of name some animals can be made to understand—they can be made to know how they are applied; but there is another class of names implying attributes—general and abstract—and these they can have no knowledge of. What we call intuitions—things understood at sight, impressions passively received—are common to man and brute. They can evidently be stored up in the memory, and they may be recalled, or, as we say, recollected—that is, re-collected. Brutes, like men, are capable of acts of memory when exercised upon intuitions alone, for they are all implied in dreaming, and a dog asleep upon a rug before the fire often shows by his barking and growling that he has vivid dreams. Man can form thoughts or conceptions, and can remember and reproduce them; but properly speaking there can be no images of these. Thoughts are to be understood and conceived—not imagined or imaged. The dog has the sensible image and the word for it, which is only another kind of sensible image; but the abstraction which man can frame, the thought which he can embody, the conception which he can call into existence, is inaccessible to any lower intelligence that we are acquainted with. However closely the anatomical structure of man may correspond with that of inferior races, however impossible it may be to discriminate between the ultimate physical elements that go to the formation of each, there is here a demarcation broad and deep, which cannot be bridged. Let science tell us all it can of comparative anatomy and comparative physiology; let it prove to us the unity and community that exist in the physical structure of all animated nature; let it descend to germ cells and protoplasm, and pronounce them to be all one—we take our stand upon the mental phenomena referred to, and which underlie these external resemblances; and we venture to assert that they at least cannot be assimilated.

It is worth while to devote a little more time to this

subject. The work which words perform in the business of knowledge is not sufficiently considered. It is hardly too much to assert that the true relation between language and thought is nowhere completely laid down. Sir Wm. Hamilton says:—"Though in general we must hold that language, as the correlative and product of thought, must be viewed as posterior to the act of thinking itself, on the other hand it must be admitted that we could never have risen above the very lowest degrees in the scale of thought without the aid of signs. A sign is necessary to give stability to our intellectual progress—to establish each step in our advance as a new starting point for our advance to another beyond. A country may be overrun by an armed host, but it is only conquered by the establishment of fortresses. Words are the fortresses of thought. They enable us to realise our dominion over what we have already overrun in thought—to make every intellectual conquest the basis of operations for others beyond." We have noticed that a dog can learn the names of a few objects; but when we speak of the qualities of those objects—of beauty, of courage, or any other such attributes, he cannot follow us—the common qualities that go to make up a general name—such as tree, or animal, are beyond him—the special knowledge contained in words he cannot penetrate: and this is the characteristic of all immature rudimentary intelligence. Let us ask at what age does a boy first use any word ending in "ation," and how many years is it before such a word as "sensation" can be explained to him. Its first component, "sense," understood as the general name for hearing, sight, touch, taste, and smell, is for a long time incomprehensible. The force of the ending "ation" cannot by any possibility be known until the power of forming abstractions has been considerably developed. No child from the nursery speaks of himself as "I"; he regards himself as an object. Hearing himself called "Georgy," he will say—"Give Georgy,"

when he wants something ; or he will plaintively indicate "Georgy" as the cause of the evil when he has hurt himself. Such a form of speech as "I hurt myself" is never heard among young children. Tennyson elaborates this thought :

The baby, new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is prest
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that "this is I."
But as he grows he gathers much,
And learns the use of "I" and "me";
And finds "I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch."
So rounds he to a separate mind,
From whence clear memory may begin ;
As thro' the frame that binds him in
His isolation grows defined.

The strict and proper notion of reasoning—the attribute by which it might be defined, is that of reaching some conclusion by an indirect means. When we perceive of two men that one is taller than the other, although the judgment we form may be the effect of reason, we do not describe it as a reasoning process ; but if the investigator, not being able to make a direct comparison between them, introduces a medium, and by its means infers that one is taller than the other, then we say the conclusion has been obtained by a process of reasoning. So in applying a common name to two individuals that resemble each other, we judge and nothing more ; but if we apply it to a third, fourth, fifth, and so on, the process we go through is reasoning. Reason, in fact, is the capacity for using media of any kind, and a consequent capacity for language ; the term reasoning has reference to the art of thinking by media, in order to reach a conclusion. It is by the intervention of signs that all the higher reasoning is carried on. In all cases, that which gives the name and character of rational to a proceeding, is the

use of means to gain the end in view. Words are signs and media, the history and mystery of which are to be traced; they are the instruments by which the reasoning process is carried on, the steps of the ladder by which man climbs up into those higher worlds where his four-footed companions cannot follow him. In an old report on deaf and dumb teaching, which I met with lately, there are some observations on the effect of words upon the intelligence which struck me as interesting, and which I will read:—"In comparing the values of hearing and seeing, if the point to be determined were the value of the direct sensations transmitted to the sensorium, through each of them, merely as direct sensation, there could not be any ground for, or moment's hesitation in, pronouncing the almost infinite superiority of the eye to the ear. For what is the sum of what we derive from the ear as a direct sensation? It is sound; and sound admits indeed of infinite variety; but strip it of the value it derives from arbitrary associations, and it is but a titillation of the organ of sense, painful or pleasurable according as it is shrill, soft, rough, discordant, or harmonious, &c. Should we on the contrary attempt to set forth the sum of the information we derive from the eye independently of the aid derived from arbitrary means, it is so immense that volumes would not contain a description of it; so precious, that no words, short of those we apply to the mind itself, can adequately express its value. Indeed, all language bears witness to this, by figuratively adopting visible imagery to signify the highest operations of intellect. Expunge such imagery from any language, and what will be left? Whence then, and the question is often asked, does it arise that those born blind have such superiority of intelligence over those born deaf? Take, it may be said, a boy of nine or ten years of age who has never seen the light, and you will find him conversable and ready to give long narratives of past occurrences, &c. Place by his side a boy of the same age who has

had the misfortune to be born deaf, and observe the contrast. The latter is insensible to all you say; he smiles perhaps, and his countenance is brightened by the beams of 'holy light'; he enjoys the face of nature, nay, reads with attention your features, and by sympathy reflects your smile or favour. But he remains mute; he gives no account of past experience or future hope; you attempt to draw something of this kind from him; he tries to understand, and to make himself understood; but he cannot, and you turn away from a scene so trying under an impression that of these two children of misfortune the comparison is greatly in favour of the blind, who appears by his language to enter into all your feelings and conceptions, while the unfortunate deaf mute can hardly be regarded as a rational being; yet he possesses all the advantages of visual information. All this is true. But the cause of this apparent superiority of intelligence in the blind is seldom properly understood. It is not that those who are blind possess a greater or anything like an equal stock of materials for mental operation, but because they possess an invaluable engine for forwarding those operations, however scanty the materials to work upon—artificial language. Language is defined to be the expression of thought; so it is, but it is, moreover, the medium of thinking—the value to man is nearly equivalent to that of his reasoning faculties; without it he could hardly be rational. It is the want of language and not the want of hearing (unless as being the cause of want of language) that occasions that deficiency of intelligence or inextension of the reasoning faculty so observable in the naturally deaf and dumb. Give them but language by which they can designate, compare, classify, and consequently remember, excite and express their sensations and ideas—then they must surpass the originally and permanently blind in intellectual perspicuity and correctness of comprehension—by as much as the sense of seeing furnishes matter for mental operations beyond the sense of hearing

considered as direct sensation. It is one thing to have fluency of words, and quite another to have correct notions or precise ideas annexed to them. But though the ear furnishes us only with the sensation of sound, and sound merely as such can stand no comparison with the multiform, delightful, and important information derived from visual impressions; yet as sound admits of such astonishing variety (above all when articulated) and is associable at pleasure in the mind with our other sensations and with our ideas and notions, it becomes the ready exponent and nomenclature of thought. It is on this account chiefly that the want of hearing is to be deplored as a melancholy chasm in the human frame."

If we are to give to the majesty of words all the homage that is here demanded, we must also charge upon them the illusions and delusions—and their name is legion—to which they have subjected us; we must remember the many sonorous periods we have heard and read—"signifying nothing;" the much pompous declamation we have listened to—which merely "darkened counsel by words without knowledge;" and the glib utterances upon great subjects which have vexed and perplexed us. The following, from the "Rejected Addresses," is of course caricature, though, after making some needful allowances for satire, it would not be difficult to match it in real life:—

Hark! I hear the strains erratic
 Dimly glance from pole to pole;
 Raptures sweet and dreams ecstatic
 Fire my everlasting soul.
 Where is Cupid's crimson motion—
 Billowy ecstasy of woe?
 Bear me straight, meandering ocean,
 Where the stagnant torrents flow.
 Blood in every vein is gushing—
 Vixen vengeance lulls my heart;
 See the Gorgon gang is rushing—
 Never, never let us part.

The language in which men describe mental operations is most commonly derived from the organ of sight; and all figurative language needs to be translated; when St. Paul would describe a state of knowledge that was imperfect and incomplete, he says,—“Now we see through a glass darkly,” and the word “darkly” in the original is just enigma. Knowledge is largely enigmatical, partly because of erroneous methods which men have adopted, and partly because the subjects it has dealt with are some of them insoluble by any method which we have at our command. When the same writer would describe a state of perfect knowledge he says, “We shall see face to face;” and another writer, of a much earlier date, when he would describe a state of things in which men should agree in their objects and thoughts, can find no more forcible words than that “they shall see eye to eye.” (Isaiah lii. 8.) The enigmatical character of knowledge is due, in no small degree, as we shall find hereafter, to the ambiguity of the medium through which it is mostly presented to us—language; we see through a glass—our knowledge comes to us in a great degree through the glass of words, and the glass refracts and distorts and colours the objects that are seen through it; but then this does not destroy its reality, it is not altogether incapable of rectification. What we see may be reconciled with what is revealed through other senses by comparison, and other mental machinery. The philosophy which preceded Locke relied very much, and was in fact built, upon the notion that the senses as a means of knowledge were fallacious and treacherous. It was argued that a stick immersed in water appeared crooked, while in the air it appeared straight; that objects were magnified and their distance mistaken in a fog; that the sun and moon appeared but a few inches in diameter, while they were really thousands of miles; that a square tower at a distance was mistaken for a round one, and so forth. These and many

similar appearances were thought to be sufficiently accounted for by ascribing them to the fallacy of the senses, which thus served, like the substantial forms and occult qualities of other theories, as a decent cover for their ignorance. The fact is that in many of those instances which are called deceptions of sense, the error is not in the information which the senses give us, but in the judgment or conclusion which we deduce from their evidence. Thus, if I mistake the picture of a cube or of a sphere delineated upon a plain surface for these solid bodies themselves, the error is not in the eye, for it has fulfilled its office by giving me information of the form, colour, apparent magnitude, &c., of the object perceived; but when I deduce from these perceptions that the object perceived is a solid and not a plane, I am guilty of a piece of false reasoning; so that the fallacy, here, is not in the senses but in the conclusion of reason. But what places the evidence of the senses in the most convincing light is, that it is by their means alone that we are able to detect this fallacy. In the case just mentioned we might reason for ever without being able to determine whether the body was a solid or a plane; but we can at once settle the question, by going so near as to see its appearance more distinctly or yet more certainly by the help of the sense of touch, whose proper province it is to perceive the dimension of solidity. Quaint writers find out similitudes that have no basis of reality in them, and yet have a certain sort of coherence and appropriateness which when once pointed out is not easy to be got rid of. One such writer says: "The five senses are the five loaves with which Jesus fed the multitude." The evidence of the senses furnishes indeed to us all a substratum of knowledge which is not untruly compared to bread in the physical economy. Other food may have qualities that render it more acceptable in certain cases, but bread is the staff of life—and the senses are the staff of knowledge.

We are not indeed restricted to them, but if we affect to despise or dispense with them our knowledge becomes attenuated and unreal.

Standing upon the sea shore and watching the waves break and foam upon the beach, there is no mistaking what is before us; it is no matter of belief; we know that what we look upon is the sea. But if ten yards from where the waves are breaking we notice a line of seaweed, we may not know *how* it has come there, yet if we have had previous acquaintance with the same state of things we infer that the tide has ebbed and left the seaweed where it is, and we have no doubt of this, although we have not seen it; and if we were giving evidence under the Indian Evidence Act we might be required to bring the person who did see it; nevertheless, we are tolerably certain that the seaweed was left there by the tide, and we may be said to know it. Now, here we reach Locke's standpoint. He says, "Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas; how comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has painted on it with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer in one word—from experience; in that all our knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives itself; our observation employed either about external, sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds perceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that which supplies our understanding with all the materials of thinking. These two are the foundations of knowledge, from whence all the ideas we have or can naturally have do spring." Sensation and reflection, according to Locke, are the two channels that convey to us all our stores of knowledge. By sensation he means whatever affects our bodily organs of which we are conscious—by reflection, whatever mental operations we are conscious of. The word "reflection" has been

complained of as ambiguous, and perhaps it is—possibly the words “observation” and “inference” might more exactly express what is meant. We are seeking the origin of knowledge—our senses are spoken of as the inlets—we observe or perceive what is around us, and from the knowledge thus acquired we proceed to the acquisition of what is only attainable by inference or by reasoning. We infer that the seaweed was left upon the shore, for we did not see the operation. We observe the print of a small foot upon the sand, and we feel pretty sure that it was made by a child, and we are warranted in doing this by knowledge we have acquired before, and this is an elementary process of reasoning, as we shall have occasion to notice hereafter, and the knowledge we obtain by means of it is scarcely less certain than that obtained by the senses. Locke calls it reflection.

I observe the sun to be exactly on the meridian, and I calculate that at a place where a friend of mine lives, 15 degrees in longitude to the west of my position, it is just eleven o'clock. In all such cases the sight of present phenomena conjoined with knowledge previously acquired leads us to infer something we do not actually observe—something past, it may be, something future, or something distant; in other words, that some event has happened, will happen, or is happening, although beyond the sphere of our observation. This inferring something beyond actual perception is what we term reasoning; to know, therefore, is to apprehend by the senses such objects as are adapted to them; and to pass beyond the knowledge so acquired to such other as our experience warrants, is to infer, or to reason. It has been attempted to invalidate human knowledge on the double ground that the senses are deceptive and reasoning illusive. Doubtless, in our journey toward the temple of knowledge, whether we traverse the one road or the other, we are liable to go astray; but this is an incident of our humanity, which attaches

to us everywhere, and under all circumstances; and it is the purpose of inquiry and investigation to furnish us marks and criteria by which we may guard ourselves against this proneness to error and mistake. But who is the monitor who tells us that no certainty is to be attained, that our instruments and our methods are alike fallacious and untrustworthy—and how did he get at this information, who told him that to know anything with certainty was impossible? By what process did he arrive at this conclusion, and how are his processes and his information better than ours? He can but invalidate human knowledge by means of human knowledge. He can but cast doubt on the result of our discernment by the contents of his own; he can but tell us that we are all wrong upon such evidence as we have been guided by; his means of knowledge are the same as ours. The sceptic who impugns the senses and the reason—our observation and our inference—can only put his own in the place of ours; the tools with which we build are the very tools with which he would destroy. His tools have no more value and no more virtue than ours. If it be futile to observe and to reason in order to construct, it is equally futile in order to destroy. To criticise human knowledge by means of human knowledge is all that any one can do, and is all that ever has been done. It is by reason that the impotence of reason has been assumed, and knowledge has been shown to be a nullity only by other knowledge that is equally valid. It is necessary to bear this in mind, and to remember the illustration of the man who was so busy lopping the boughs of a tree on which he stood that he inadvertently lopped the bough on which he was standing. This scepticism, however imposing it may appear, is only a demonstration to prove that all demonstration is vain. Whatever disparages, and seeks to destroy such evidence as human nature is compelled to rely on is

scepticism. It may be that of the dogmatist, or that of the destructive; but if it would shake the foundation of knowledge, of the evidence that is alone attainable by man, it is a pernicious scepticism; to deny the possibility or validity of knowledge is to bring back confusion and chaos. Perceptions of sense are set against and opposed to conclusions of reason; but if as witnesses Perception and Reason give opposite testimonies, and Reason claims to be believed in preference, cross-examination brings out the fact that Reason's testimony is nothing more than hearsay gained from Perception. By its own account it cannot possibly have done anything more than compare and interpret the evidences which Perception has given. In this sphere, as in other spheres, Reason can do nothing more than reconcile the testimonies of Perception with one another. When it proved that the sun does not move round the earth, but that the earth turns on its axis, Reason substituted for an old interpretation which was irreconcilable with various facts a new interpretation which was reconcilable with them, and equally well accounted for the more obvious facts.

You will have noticed in the paragraph I read from Locke, that he says "There are two fountains of knowledge, from whence all the ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring." Here comes in the stumbling of his work—the word idea which he uses as a synonym for knowledge. But he uses it also in the very widest and most general sense: he says—"It is the term which I think serves best to stand for whatsoever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks: I have used it to express whatever is meant by phantasm, notion, species, or whatever it is which the mind can be employed about in thinking." Again he says—"External objects furnish the mind with the ideas of sensible qualities, which are all those different perceptions they produce in us, and the mind furnishes the understanding with ideas of its own

operations." The word is used by Locke in the loosest way, and it is not possible to attach a precise and definite meaning to it. I have tried to obtain from many sources such an explanation of the word as would cover the use made of it before Locke's time, but I have failed. Sir Wm. Hamilton complains that to the writers of his time "The history of the word 'idea' seems to be completely unknown. Previous to the age of Descartes, as a philosophical term it was employed exclusively by the Platonists, and with them the idea was not an object of perception—the idea was not derived from without. Word and thing, idea has been the *crux philosophorum* since Aristotle cursed it to the present day. Plato agreed with the rest of the ancient philosophers in this—that all things consist of matter and form; and that the matter of which all things were made existed from eternity without form: but he likewise believed that there are eternal forms of all possible things, which exist without matter; and to these eternal and immaterial forms he gave the name of ideas." Milton says—

God saw his works were good,
Answering His fair idea.

Having such an origin, having such a history, and having such associations, Locke would have done well to annex to the word—if he used it all—some precise and definite signification; and this he has not done. Whatever the word might originally have signified, it came to be employed in English with a specific and useful meaning. In Boswell's "Life of Johnson," I find the following passage:—"Dr. Johnson was particularly indignant against the almost universal use of the word 'idea' in the sense of notion or opinion, when it is clear that idea can only signify something of which an image can be formed in the mind. We may have an idea or image of a mountain, a tree, or a building; but we cannot surely have an idea or image of an argument or proposition. Yet, we hear the sages of the law delivering

their ideas upon the question under consideration, 'and the first speakers in Parliament, entirely coinciding in the idea which has been ably stated by an honourable member,' or 'reprobating an idea unconstitutional, and fraught with the most dangerous consequences to a great and free country.'" Dr. Johnson called this "modern cant." What would he have said of the French Emperor, who made war for an idea, tickling the vanity of his subjects by a foolish and unmeaning word?

Our president is a lawyer, and his profession are careful in the use of words. Yet, eminent legal writers lay themselves open to Dr. Johnson's rebuke. Looking the other day into the tenth edition of "The Principles of the Law of Real Property," by Joshua Williams, I found this sentence:—"The first thing, then, the student has to do, is to get rid of the idea of absolute ownership. Such an idea is quite unknown to the English law. No man is in law the absolute owner of lands. He can only hold an estate in them." And turning to the profession of our hon. secretary, I find so eminent a man as Sir William Gull writing:—"Therapeutics are governed by the idea that disease is an entity which must be combated and cast out." Following in the wake of Dr. Johnson's criticism, Mr. James Mill gives us the simplest and best application of the word that I am acquainted with. He says:—"We have two classes of feelings; one, that which exists when the object of sense is present; another, that which exists when the object of sense has ceased to be present. The one class of feelings I call sensations; the other class of feelings I call ideas." Hobbes says:—"The light of human minds is perspicuous words—by exact definitions first snuffed and purged from ambiguity; ambiguous words are like *ignes fatui*; and reasoning upon them is wandering among innumerable absurdities and their end contention and sedition or contempt." It is not mere inconvenience and inadvertence that follows upon the misuse of this word. A more fertile source of error and confusion was hardly ever

introduced into our literature than this word "idea"—derived from a Greek word signifying to see. It is almost impossible to fix its meaning throughout the multifarious ways in which Locke employs it, as it is also impossible to know what precise thought it represented and what was its exact worth in the minds of the men who originally coined it at the intellectual mint. Locke speaks of knowledge as a great and complex whole made up and compounded of innumerable ideas, resolvable at last into ideas of sensation and reflection. The web of knowledge, as he describes it, is woven from this warp and woof; the pattern may be infinitely varied by different combinations. But at the bottom ideas are the basis and the staple; impressions derived from sense, by some process of mental chemistry, become ideas. Locke found the word in the world, the very current coin of philosophy which met him at every turn, and he did not inquire with sufficient care into its origin and its antecedents. According to Sir Wm. Hamilton the real history of the word has been obscured and lost, and its reappearance in modern times was but as the ghost of its former self, maintaining only a shadowy connection between the theories of the past and the inquiries of the present. "It is a term," says Locke, "which stands best for whatsoever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks." It would seem, however, that the word which stands best for an object would be the name of the object—it would seem more correct to say that we think of an object by its name rather than by the idea of it. The object of the understanding when a man thinks is either something presented to the senses, which is then not an idea, or it is something represented in the mind, which may then be an idea, or image, or a notion. The consequences that have been deduced from Locke's doctrine are not to be charged upon him, he did an inestimable work in stating and explaining the true foundations of knowledge, and if the phraseology which had been handed down to him possessed an inheritance of

mysterious meaning, he must needs make use of it, for he could not create another, and the result has been that he only partially unravelled the perplexity that had been bequeathed to him. Locke did not mean to take his system of ideas from the ancients, but his own as differing from theirs is not sufficiently discriminated, and educated as he had been when those doctrines were alone admitted, writing for those who were prepared for none other, he does not keep clear in his own mode of treatment, still less in the effect produced on others of the impressions left by the old doctrines. He says, "Since the mind in all its thoughts and reasonings hath no other immediate object but its own ideas which it alone does or can contemplate, it is evident our knowledge is only conversant about them." That he saw in part the consequence of this doctrine is plain, for he adds, "It is evident that the mind knows not things immediately, but only by the intervention of ideas it has of them. Our knowledge, therefore, is real only so far as there is a conformity between our ideas and the reality of things. But what shall be here the criterion? How shall the mind, when it perceives nothing but its own ideas, know that they agree with the things themselves?" This is substantially the dilemma that Berkeley insists upon—knowing only ideas we are precluded from knowing anything else. By the very terms of the proposition we are assumed to be acquainted with nothing but ideas, and it is not difficult to see how, from the net of words in which the subject was thus entangled, this was almost an inevitable result. There was an old notion in the world which influenced all its thinking, and which was once reckoned a self-evident principle, from which a large crop of error has been produced, and it was this: nothing can act or be acted upon but when and where it is present. It seems a necessary consequence from this principle, that when the mind perceives, either the objects of its perception must come into it, or it must go out

of the body to these objects. We may notice this opinion in the language common to a certain class of subjects: when a man does not observe what is going on around him, it is attributed to absence of mind; when he is what we call crazy, he is said to be out of his mind. An eminent French author says: "We see the sun, the stars, and an infinity of objects without us, and it is not at all likely that the soul sallies out of the body, and as it were takes a walk through the heavens to contemplate all these objects." The perplexities consequent upon these theories have infected the whole subject. Berkeley infers the reality of ideas from the circumstance that magnitude and figure, as perceived by the eye and as perceived by the touch, are things in appearance very different; and Hume employs a similar argument when he says, "The table we see seems to diminish as we remove further from it; but the real table which exists, independent of us, suffers no alteration. It was, therefore, nothing but its image which was present to the mind." The known laws of optics, however, are a sufficient answer to such reasonings, and prove that tangible magnitude must assume the precise appearances to the eye which it does assume.

In asserting, as he does, that we perceive nothing but our own ideas, and in asserting at the same time that we have a knowledge of external objects, Locke devised a puzzle which no ingenuity has been able to get out of; for if we perceive only ideas, we are shut out from the possibility of knowing what the represented objects are; nay, even from the possibility of knowing that such things as represented objects exist; no way is open by which the faintest suspicion of their existence could have access to us. We cannot, therefore, both know external objects, and yet perceive nothing but ideas. I have no intention, even if I were able, to introduce you to the mazes of the controversy which ultimately arose out of this doctrine of ideas. Bishop Berkeley founded

his system of idealism upon it ; but what the good bishop precisely meant it is not always easy to determine, for although a most acute reasoner, he is not consistent, and his language is often very vague. He says, for instance, and in one sense it is the seminal principle of his system—"Some truths there are so near and obvious to the mind, that a man need only to open his eyes to see them. Such I take this important one to be, that all the choir of heaven and furniture of earth—in a word, all those bodies which compose this mighty frame of the world have not any substance without a mind." It is quite clear that things would not exist as they do to us, if the intelligence which apprehends them acted through a different organization ; if, instead of the nerves and apparatus he possesses, man felt and thought through another sort and set of instruments, he would most likely feel and think after quite another fashion than he does ; if he saw through a different medium, what he saw might put on quite another appearance, and might also assume another aspect when it reached the intellectual stage of its manifestation. But Berkeley goes further than this, and denies to the world any substance without a mind. The world, we say, is what we—rightly instructed—perceive it to be. Berkeley says, without a mind perceiving, it has not any substance ; this, instead of being the plain truth which he asserts, is surely a delusion. Lord Byron writes—

When Bishop Berkeley said there was no matter,
It was no matter what he said.

But this is not quite true ; the bishop's speculation is a most refined and subtle one, and is a good mental exercise. Berkeley is not, as Pope says, to be vanquished with a grin, though one may perhaps say without presumption that his argument is mainly dependent upon the ambiguity of words.

In the century after Locke, David Hartley attempted to explain the origin of knowledge by an elaborate system of vibrations, suggested by the then recent optical dis-

coveries of Sir Isaac Newton. He says, "External objects being corporeal can act upon the nerves and brain, which are also corporeal, by nothing but impressing motion on them." Sir Isaac Newton had said, "All sensation is performed, and the limbs of animals moved, in a voluntary manner by the power and actions of a certain very subtle spirit, *i.e.* by the vibrations of this spirit propagated through the solid capillaments of the nerves from the external organs of the senses to the brain, and from the brain to the muscles," to which Hartley adds "The doctrine of vibrations as here delivered undertakes to account for the origin of our ideas and motions, &c." This doctrine did not meet with a very wide acceptance, and was derided by many metaphysicians, though it so far conciliated the then, and perhaps, ever mystical Coleridge, that he called his eldest son Hartley after the author. The system of Hartley was, in many respects, a remarkable though somewhat crude anticipation of modern discoveries respecting the nervous system. I speak under the correction of the hon. secretary, but, as I understand it, it is the action of external forces upon the nerves to which our special sensations are due. Why oscillations of the air of certain specific swiftness are felt as sound or as colour is unknown, but that all mental action is accompanied by and dependent upon some corresponding physical action is, I suppose, clearly ascertained. How the two are conjoined we don't know, though I fancy we may take it for granted that all mental manifestations are inextricably interwoven with certain physical developments. Sever the optic nerve and vision ceases—and in the animal economy other nerves have an equally distinct function; and though the form of the expression is open to objection, the mind may be said to work by a machinery of nerves, which are dependent upon external stimulus, and it is only by the co-operation of the two—normal nerve and normal stimulus—that the product of normal intelligence *is* ultimately produced.

We need not fear to explore this physical side of our mental economy to the utmost. It is possible that in bringing new knowledge to bear upon these problems the old words may have to be used in new and dubious and questionable senses, and this may be inevitable; but as inquiry goes on a better and clearer nomenclature will be found, and ultimately the new facts, whatever they may be, will get for themselves a clothing of unexceptionable words; the new wine will be put into new bottles and both will be preserved. Relying upon certain physical facts, writers have said that thought is secreted as bile is secreted; but there is nothing to warrant the statement. Chemistry *combines* elements, but does not *create* them. Its products are the resultants of its factors, but Newton's "Principia," and "Paradise Lost" are not resolvable into vibrations. The writers of such works may depend for their mental activity upon brain and nerve, but that the product of these can be assimilated with their ultimate production has not only not been proved, but is contradicted by reason and by experience.

In this region of knowledge, under the dominion of inference, error is most common, arising from ambiguity of language, and from the tendency to indulge in figurative forms of speech. Locke has furnished many examples of it, although he has at the same time denounced it in strong terms. Here is a sample from the Essay:—"External objects furnish the mind with the ideas of sensible qualities which are all those different perceptions they produce in us, and the mind furnishes the understanding with ideas of its own operations." "The *mind*" and "*us*," and "the *understanding*" are here spoken of as though they were different things carrying on a certain commerce amongst themselves, and having separate existences. Such a mode of expression is well enough when we are talking about indifferent matters, but when definite notions have to be expressed they are dangerous, for writers insensibly

fall into loose metaphorical modes of writing until they fail to attach any precise signification to their words, and the words gradually so far influence the thought that it is forgotten they are figurative, embodying mere tropes and metaphors. This is not a mere superficial and unimportant error. It is one that pervades and vitiates a large amount of what has been written on these subjects. Some writers have made much of a distinction between the understanding and the reason ; in fact, it is the great characteristic of one school of writers, whilst others write of the will and of the imagination as though they were distinct powers and departments in human affairs. The simple fact is, that man acts both rationally and emotionally ; and as he does one or the other, it is convenient to speak of the operations in a somewhat figurative manner, and no harm arises so long as it is kept in view that the language needs reconstructing if it is to be taken literally. If we say that a man perceives and remembers, and imagines and reasons, we convey everything that is contained in the more imposing phrase, that the mind of man has the faculties of perception, and memory, and imagination, and reasoning. To say that a man hopes and fears, and rejoices and grieves, is a form of speech that expresses just the same meaning as the more circuitous and sonorous phraseology that the mind of man is endowed with the susceptibilities, or subject to the affections of hope and fear, and joy and grief. Independently of the disadvantages which in science must always attend circuitous tautological and figurative expressions that add nothing to the sense, such language in mental and moral philosophy gives rise to peculiar evils that require special attention. We are speaking, be it observed, of language as an instrument of investigation and philosophical statement, and not as a vehicle of common intercourse. The work of the mind is often represented as if it were carried on by independent agents, originating ideas, passing them from one to another, and transacting other business amongst them-

selves. In this species of phraseology the mind frequently appears a sort of field, in which perception, recollection, imagination, reason, will, conscience, and the passions carry on their operations like so many powers in alliance with, or in hostility to, each other. Sometimes one of those powers is supreme, the others are subordinate; one usurps authority and another submits; one reports and others listen; one deludes and another is deceived; until the mind or the intellectual being himself is jostled out of sight altogether by transactions in which he appears to have no concern. At other times these powers are described as having dealings with their owner, or master, lending him ministerial assistance, acting under his control or direction, supplying him with evidence or instruction, and enlightening him by revelations, as if he himself were detached or apart from the faculties which he is said to possess and to command, and to which he is represented as listening. Hobbes says: "The metaphorical speech of attributing command and subjection to the faculties of the soul, as if they made a commonwealth or family within themselves and could speak one to another, is very improper in searching the truth of a question;" and Locke himself, though he has not succeeded in avoiding such phraseology, says: "I suspect that this way of speaking of faculties has led many into a confused notion of so many distinct agents in us, which had their several provinces and authorities, and did command, obey, and perform several actions as so many distinct beings, which has been no small occasion of wrangling, obscurity, and uncertainty in questions relating to them." It may not be altogether unprofitable to select a few examples of this propensity, as it can hardly be doubted that the constant use of particular words and phrases gives them a power over the thoughts to which they have no legitimate right, and produces a habit of acquiescence in mere cloudy words which have no representatives amongst real existences.

“The world,” says the learned author of *Hermes*, “has been likened to a variety of things, but it appears to resemble no one more than some moving spectacle (such as a procession or a triumph) that abounds in every part with splendid objects, some of which are still departing as others make their appearance. The senses look on while the sight passes, perceiving as much as is immediately present, which they report with tolerable accuracy to the soul’s superior powers.” Another writer says, “Reason and the senses, the two principles of truth, besides that they are not always sincere, reciprocally delude each other. The senses delude the reason by false appearances, and the trickery they practise is passed on themselves in return. Reason takes its revenge. The passions of the soul disturb the senses, and make upon them vexatious impressions. They vie with each other in deceiving and being deceived.”

It has been said, this personifying the faculties goes on to such an extent that an intelligent being, like a constitutional monarch, transacts all regular business through his ministers; as if the understanding were Secretary of State for the Home Department; the faculty of judgment, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas; and reason, First Lord of the Treasury. Such a mode of writing may be suitable enough on certain occasions and subjects, but when we are dealing with what needs to be treated with precision and accuracy, the plainer and more concise the language, the smaller is the chance of mistake. Locke condemns figurative speeches and allusions in all discourses that pretend to inform or instruct, regards them as inventions of rhetoric to mislead the judgment, adding that when truth and knowledge are concerned they cannot but be thought a great fault either of the language or person that makes use of them. Yet it is curious to observe how freely he sometimes indulges in what he so vigorously condemns; as in that celebrated passage in which, with a beauty and pathos seldom exceeded, he speaks of the

transitory character of our reminiscences. "There seems to be," says he, "a constant decay of all our ideas, even of those which are struck deepest, and in minds the most retentive; so that if they be not sometimes renewed by repeated exercise of the senses or reflection on those kind of objects which at first occasioned them, the print wears out, and at last there is nothing to be seen. Thus the ideas as well as children of our youth often die before us; and our minds represent to us those tombs to which we are approaching, where though the brass and marble remain, yet the inscriptions are effaced by time, and the imagery moulders away. The pictures drawn in our minds are laid in fading colours, and, if not sometimes refreshed, vanish and disappear."

Having determined that men owe their ideas, or as I prefer to call it their knowledge, to sensation and reflection, Locke proceeds to group our whole stock of ideas under these two heads. He divides the body of human knowledge into the various subjects of which it may be supposed to consist, and under the head sensation he brings together those distinct and separate portions which he considers are traceable to that source; he maps out the boundaries of one very large tract of human knowledge, and assigns it to sensation; he examines its products with great care, and shows that originally by some process or other, they owed their existence to the senses, and he designates them simple ideas, viz., ideas such as those of colour, taste, sound, &c. He then applies the same method to his other source of ideas—reflection—and he undertakes to analyse these, and to prove that however disguised they may be, they have one origin; and here is the stress of the controversy. Locke calls this class of ideas complex, and he proceeds to untwist the most subtle and elaborate of them, and to exhibit the threads and fibres out of which they have been spun; the pattern and the hues may be vastly unlike the original material that passed into the loom, but it is the mind which has

manipulated them and given to them forms and colours which it has derived from the great world by which it is surrounded and nourished.

It would be impossible for me to give even an outline of this portion of Locke's *Essay*. It occupies nearly half the work. He traverses the whole sphere of human knowledge, and gathering specimens as he goes along he resolves them into their elements, proving that to human beings they are cognisable only in certain ways, and that, however various their appearances, they are resolvable at last into ideas of sensation or of reflection.

It is not pretended that this part of Locke's great argument is altogether unassailable, but its main propositions—making allowance for faultiness of expression—have lighted the path of all subsequent inquiries, and have influenced and governed all that has been since written on the subject. If his statement is true, there is another point to be noticed which follows as a matter of course. If all ideas are acquired, as he says, then there are none born with us, and the early chapters of the work are devoted to the subject of innate ideas, against which he directs a vigorous polemic. In Locke's time, this part of the subject was surrounded with the greatest difficulties; it was mixed up and misunderstood until it passed out of the region of calm discussion into that of heated partisanship; much as in a preceding generation what were called realism and nominalism vehemently excited men's passions. One finds it difficult to comprehend the state of feeling which can be roused to such great excitement by questions so abstract, and far removed from practical results. Locke strenuously contended that we have no innate ideas, and men fought as resolutely for the possession of innate ideas as in other times they fought for the recovery of the eleven days which they reckoned had been lost by the reformation of the calendar. Men had possession of a certain

quantity of ideas or knowledge. Locke believed he could trace the whole to two distinct and defined sources. Let us hear him on the subject of innate ideas—he says, “It is an established opinion amongst some men that there are in the understanding certain innate principles; some primary notions, characters as it were, stamped upon the mind of man, which the soul receives in its very first being; and brings into the world with it. It would be sufficient to convince unprejudiced readers of the falseness of this supposition if I should only show (as I hope I shall in the following parts of this discourse) how men barely by the use of their natural faculties, may attain to all the knowledge they have without the help of any innate impressions, and may arrive at certainty without any such original notions or principles. For I imagine anyone will easily grant that it would be impertinent to suppose the ideas of colours innate in a creature to whom God hath given sight and a power to receive them by the eyes from external objects; and no less unreasonable would it be to attribute several truths to the impressions of nature and innate characters, when we may observe in ourselves faculties fit to attain as easy and certain knowledge of them as if they were originally imprinted on the mind. But because a man is not permitted, without censure, to follow his own thoughts in the search of truth, when they lead him ever so little out of the common road, I shall set down the reasons that made me doubt of the truth of that opinion, as an excuse for my mistake, if I be in one; which I leave to be considered by those who, with me, dispose themselves to embrace truth wherever they find it.”

It was contended, on the other side, that there were principles, practical and speculative, universally agreed upon by all mankind, and which, therefore, must be brought into the world with them as necessarily and really as their inherent faculties.

To this Locke replies, that if such principles can be

otherwise acquired, they are not, even by universal agreement, proved to be innate ; but he denies the existence of principles to which the universal consent of all mankind has been given. To which it was rejoined, that the principles were recognised as soon as propounded ; for example : that whatever is, is ; and that it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be. Locke replies : “I take liberty to say that these propositions are so far from having an universal assent that there are a great part of mankind to whom they are not so much as known.” “And to say a notion is imprinted on the mind and yet at the same time to say that the mind is ignorant of it and never yet took notice of it, is to make this impression nothing. No proposition can be said to be in the mind which it never yet knew, which it was never yet conscious of. For if any one may, then, by the same reason, all propositions that are true, and the mind is capable of ever assenting to, may be said to be in the mind and to be imprinted ; since if any one can be said to be in the mind, which it never yet knew, it must be only because it is capable of knowing it ; and so the mind is, of all truths it ever shall know. Nay, that truths may be imprinted in the mind which it never did nor ever shall know : for a man may live long, and die at last in ignorance of many truths which his mind was capable of knowing, and that with certainty.”

There is much more to the same purpose, and the opinion which Locke declares was then so widely prevalent, has pretty nearly disappeared from the world. A doctrine of similar import, but more carefully elaborated, has taken its place, and the controversy in the new terms is, perhaps, as unsettled as ever. Locke's doctrine has undergone some modification, due to the more accurate knowledge which has been obtained of the nervous system. I speak again under the correction of the honorary secretary, but, as I understand it, the nervous structure is the instrument of all mental action ; and

mental activity means and implies increased power in those nervous centres through which the operations are carried on—just as muscular activity is dependent upon nerve power—whilst the muscular activity develops increased muscular power, shown by augmented size and weight. There is action and re-action; under normal conditions of health, mental activity is developed and corroborated by nerve force, and a change and growth of structure is the result of prolonged and regular normal exertion of mental effort. The organisation, as a living machine, is more capable of mental work; it can co-ordinate and hold together conceptions that formerly it could not grasp or comprehend. Stated in terms of mind this is mere common place. That habit gives facility is a truism, but *how* it does it is another matter. Muscle grows by exercise to a certain point; the tension of a muscle differs scarcely at all in principle from the tension of a piece of leather. Nervous structures are subject to the same law, and, the proper stimulus being applied, they become capable of more and more elaborate work. Mind is not nerve; but a mind of great power must possess a relative nerve power, and this fact connects itself with Locke's philosophy in this way: a nervous structure so built up by mental work, by the co-ordination of experiences, by training and cultivation, may be transmitted, and generation after generation may feel in its nervous structure the effects of the changes that have been wrought and of the methods that have been employed; and so the result of culture is to convert what was a stony ground, or a thorny one, into a soil where the seeds of knowledge may germinate under more favourable conditions, and become of a higher and better type. In one sense the fact is a mere commonplace, in another it is still only partially understood. Improved mental culture means ultimately an improved mental machinery; it means a physical basis of more capacity; and such physical basis may be transmitted on and on,—and so

distant generations come into possession from the first of an aptitude and a power which may be compared to, and almost pass for, an innate stock of knowledge.

This fact, like a thousand others which time has unfolded, was observed by Shakespeare, though he does not attempt to explain or account for it. In "Cymbeline" we have two boys stolen in infancy from the Court of their father, who is called the King of Britain, and Belarius, who stole them, and brought them up as peasants, says:—

How hard it is to hide the sparks of nature !
 These boys know little they are sons to the king ;
 Nor Cymbeline dreams that they are alive.
 They think they're mine ; and, though train'd up thus meanly
 I' the cave wherein they bow, their thoughts do hit
 The roofs of palaces ; and nature prompts them,
 In simple and low things to prince it much
 Beyond the trick of others.

And on the same subject he says again,—

O thou goddess,
 Thou divine nature, how thyself thou blazonest
 In these two princely boys ! They are as gentle
 As zephyrs blowing below the violet,
 Not wagging his sweet head : and yet as rough,
 Their royal blood enchaf'd, as the rudest wind
 That by the top doth take the mountain pine,
 And make him stoop to the vale. 'Tis wonder
 That an invisible instinct should frame them
 To royalty unlearn'd ; honour untaught ;
 Civility not seen from other ; valour,
 That wildly grows in them, but yields a crop
 As if it had been sow'd.

With Shakespeare, all this effect is due to nature ; but in these days we want an explanation of the word—we want to know *the how* of the operation — we want to discover the specific cause of so remarkable an effect. It was long ago observed in the animal creation ; it was well known that races could be modified and improved by selection and cultivation. It was not

known that the development of intelligence and its definite progress were dependent upon the same law. Dogs were not pointers by nature, they became so by the training and tuition of man; and if all our game was destroyed the generation of pointers might become extinct, unless it happened that another use was found for them—as of the pointer who had shared his master's beer at a certain public-house, and would never pass the house without making a point at the sign-board, his master making a point of going in.

The intelligence of each generation of men may seem to be an original stock common to the species, but investigation shows it to be an inheritance. Knowledge is all derived from particulars, from individual things; by comparison, and by reflection it gets put into general propositions, which are more or less accurate, as examples are well or ill selected. Each generation inherits a stock of such general propositions, which in most cases are taken up without any comparison with the original particulars from which they have been deduced, and so they pass current as having the image and superscription of truth. They are subsequently found not to fit in with later knowledge; being weighed in the balance they are found wanting. Knowledge must be justified of all her children—their pedigree and their title must in each case be proved.

Locke's doctrine on this subject is condensed into the scholastic maxim—“*nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu*”—nothing is in the intellect that was not previously in the senses. Applied to a generation, this may not seem so—applied to the race, it stands apparently upon incontrovertible evidence. Locke says: “I must confess when I first began this discourse of the understanding, and a good while after, I had not the least thought that any consideration of words was at all necessary to it. But when, having passed over the original and composition of our ideas, and begun to examine the extent and

certainly of our knowledge, I found it had so near a connection with words that unless their force and manner of significance were first well observed, there could be very little said clearly and pertinently concerning knowledge; which, being conversant about truth, had constantly to do with propositions. And though it terminated in things, yet it was, for the most part, so much by the intervention of words, that they seemed scarcely separable from our general knowledge." He goes on to say, "It may lead us a little towards the original of all our knowledge and notions if we remark how great a dependence our words have on common sensible ideas; and how those which be made use of to stand for actions and notions quite removed from sense have their rise from thence, and from obvious sensible ideas are transferred to more abstruse significations, and made to stand for ideas that come not under the cognisance of our senses; for example, to imagine, apprehend, comprehend, adhere, conceive, instil, disgust, disturbance, tranquility, &c., are all words taken from the operations of sensible things and applied to certain modes of thinking. Spirit in its primary signification is breath, and I doubt not but if we could trace them to their sources, we should find, in all languages, the names which stand for things that fall not under the senses to have had their first use from sensible ideas." Since Locke's time the science of language has been made the subject of closer study, upon much more ample materials than was possible in his day; and his conjecture that in all languages the names which stand for things that do not fall under the senses have had their first rise from sensible ideas, may be said to have been demonstrated so that one of the most eminent of English writers on philology, Mr. Garnett, says, adapting the scholastic maxim before referred to, "The primitive elements of speech are demonstrably taken from the sensible properties of matter, and *nihil in oratione quod non prius in sensu* may be regarded as an incontro-

vertible axiom. Language has not even distinct terms for the functions of the different bodily senses, much less for those of the mind—an epithet primarily meaning sharp-pointed or edged is metaphorically applied to denote acid, shrill, bright, nimble, passionate, perspicuous, besides many minuter shades of signification.” It may well be asked, if there be transcendental knowledge, why has it to express itself in language borrowed from the senses? and if it had another origin than the senses, why was it not able to clothe itself in a garb of speech fitted to its higher pretension?

The position of Locke in reference to the doctrine of innate ideas as expounded in his day seems to be impregnable, though it needs to be interpreted in this day by the discoveries since made in physiology. But Locke’s position has been to some extent undermined and impaired by works of imagination. It is not that his theory has from this quarter been directly assailed, that his lines have been broken or his defences stormed; but a gorgeous phantom has been conjured up, which has dazzled and delighted until it has been forgotten that it has no bases of fact and is merely a castle in the air. Some one has said that he cared not who made laws for the people so long as he might make their songs; and whatever might be the force of logic, the magic of poetry is for a time more potent, it blends together thought and feeling, creating forms and colours which logic protests against in vain. Wordsworth has left us a piece of work of this sort which we could not wish other than it is, but which we must regard as only a splendid illusion. He says:—

Our birth is but a sleep, and a forgetting;
 The soul that rises with us, our life’s star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar.
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God who is our home.

Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
 Shades of the prison house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
 But he beholds the light and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy ;
 The Youth, who daily farther from the east
 Must travel, still is nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended ;
 At length the Man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.

And he raises his " song of thanks and praise " for

Those first affections,
 Those shadowy recollections,
 Which, be they what they may,
 Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
 Are yet a master light of all our seeing ;
 Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
 Our noisy years seem moments in the being
 Of the Eternal Silence ; truths that wake,
 To perish never ;
 Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
 Nor Man nor Boy,
 Nor all that is at enmity with joy
 Can utterly abolish or destroy.
 Hence in a season of calm weather
 Though inland far we be,
 Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither,
 Can in a moment travel thither,
 And see the children sport upon the shore,
 And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Logic ineffectually opposes such vaticinations as these—

Science comes but slowly, slowly, creeping on from point to point.

Whereas poetry

Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
 and gives to airy nothing
 A local habitation and a name.

I feel that I have already trespassed too long on your time, although I am conscious that I have only given the

slightest and slenderest account of Locke's work. I have passed over altogether perhaps the most important part of it, that which John Stuart Mill calls "The immortal Third Book," which treats specially of language, of the imperfection and abuse of words, and from which it may be gathered that more than half the obscurity which surrounds certain regions of knowledge is due to the misunderstanding of words.

The problem that Locke set himself to solve, and that he has done more than any single man to explain, "the original, certainty, and extent of human knowledge," is yet debated as keenly as ever, though after a somewhat different manner, and for the introduction of which we are indebted to Locke. Volume after volume is still devoted to the subject, and the world may yet have to wait some time before the conflicting theories and opinions are reconciled; but when they are so, much else will be made clear which is now doubtful and obscure. The writer whose influence in England has been most widely felt on these subjects in recent years was probably the late Sir William Hamilton. He says:—"It is only a confusion of ideas or of words, or of both together, to talk of the perception of a distant object, that is, of an object not in relation to our senses. An external object is only perceived as it is in relation to our sense, and it is only in relation to our sense inasmuch as it is present to it. To say, for example, that we perceive by sight the sun or the moon is a false or elliptical expression. We perceive nothing but certain modifications of light in immediate relation to our organ of vision, and, so far from it being true that when ten men look at the sun or moon they all see the same individual object, the truth is that each of these persons sees a different object, because each person sees a different complement of rays in relation to his individual organ. It has been held, that in looking at the sun, moon, or any other object of sight, we are

actually conscious of these distant objects, or that these distant objects are those really represented to the mind. Nothing can be more absurd. We perceive through no sense aught external but what is in immediate contact with its organ." This may be a true account of the matter; but it is not a true interpretation of our consciousness, and is but a slightly modified version of the answer given by the Greeks in early times to the question, "How does the mind perceive matter?" Shut up, as they assumed the mind to be, like a light in a dark lantern, how did it become acquainted with things outside the body? It was agreed on all hands that the mind could operate only where it was present; and how could it be present to the things of the material universe? In answer to this query, some asserted that the mind walked out of the body, in order to take cognisance of things of sense; while another set asserted that it did not walk out of the body, and, consequently, that it did not perceive the things of sense at all, but only the species, images, or ideas of them. This was explained by assuming that all material things dispersed from themselves filmy or shadowy representations, which, being received by the senses, were, by them, transmitted to the mind, which treasured them up; and that, with regard to most of them, the mind, by its peculiar chemistry, sublimated the particular into general ideas. Theories, even more fanciful than these, were adopted by men of the highest powers; but, in truth, they belong to the region of romance, not of philosophy.

When we turn from writers like these to the pages of Locke, we feel ourselves in a different atmosphere. And yet, though Locke is no disciple of any previous sect, and would probably have distinctly disavowed, if called upon, the doctrine of phantasms or species reaching the brain and so forming ideas, throughout his immortal treatise he struggles with impediments derived from that doctrine, owing to the manner in which it had

affected the language he employs. He systematically uses the word ideas, as if ideas were something different from the mind itself. He speaks of the mind being at first like a blank sheet of paper, or like a dark cave that is gradually furnished with ideas as the paper might be written on with words, or the cave, by admitting light and shadows through a chink, might be supplied with reflections, and this became the prevalent way of thinking. How mind perceives matter we do not know, and perhaps never may know; it may be an ultimate fact to be accepted but not explained, for to explain means to make a thing plainer, and there is here no further explanation to be given; reason or inference has no evidence to give, and we are shut up to the testimony of the senses from which there lies no appeal. When we turn to that phase of the subject belonging more strictly to the mind proper, we are again embarrassed by the involutions of language, the mind has been mapped out and divided into numerous faculties and powers—perception, conception, attention, abstraction, memory, imagination, and so forth—as if each one were a little monarch, having a territory of its own, whereas, however we may use the words, thoughts, ideas, images, notions, feelings, &c., yet all these are but different conditions, or states of mind, and nothing separate from the mind itself; conventional and convenient words in which to speak of mental work. For what do we mean by the word mind distinct from the word man? do we discriminate anything more clearly by it? do we open any new light by saying the mind of man? No proof is required that the body alone cannot move and see, and hear, and feel, and taste, and smell; it must be an animated body to do all this, and if animated then mind is less properly something more than something different. Nor, because modern investigation has proved the inseparable alliance of all intellectual phenomena with organic conditions need we fear that by

identifying the word mind with the word man, we may run into materialism. It is not even true that the eye sees, or the ear hears; but the man sees because he has an eye to see with, and hears because he has an ear. By analogy, if it be true that our intellectual operations are ordered and maintained through organic instruments, it is still the man who knows and remembers and reasons and contrives; and these are intellectual states of that man, and he is a being fitted for immortality, because he is created capable of such states.

BUTLER'S ANALOGY.

“THE Analogy of Religion to the Constitution and Course of Nature” is the title of the most profound and argumentative work that the Church of England has given to the world. It may not stand upon so exalted a pedestal as it did half a century ago, and it may not now command the implicit assent which was once given to it; but it remains a model of calm and fair discussion, and if it does not altogether silence objections, it proves that they are not so triumphant as they were formerly assumed to be.

The argument of the work travels over many particulars, but it lies in a nutshell, and is thus stated by Butler—“If there be an analogy or likeness between that system of things and dispensation of Providence, which Revelation informs us of, and that system of things and dispensation of Providence, which experience together with reason informs us of, *i.e.* the known course of Nature; this is a presumption that they have both the same author and cause.” “It must be allowed just to join abstract reasonings with the observation of facts and argue from such facts as are known to others that are like them; from that part of the Divine Government over intelligent creatures which comes under our view to that larger and more general government over them which is beyond it, and from what is present to collect what is likely, credible or not incredible, will be hereafter.” “Let us compare the known constitution and course of things with what is said to be the moral system of Nature; the acknowledged dispensations of Providence, or that government which we find ourselves under, with what religion teaches to believe and expect, and see whether they are not

analogous and of a piece." "It is not my design to inquire further into the nature, the foundation, and the measure of probability; or whence it proceeds that *likeness* should beget that presumption, opinion and full conviction, which the human mind is formed to receive from it, and which it does necessarily produce in every one." . . . "For there is no man can make a question, but that the sun will rise to-morrow, and be seen, where it is seen at all, in the figure of a circle and not in that of a square."

Such is the scope and design of this great work, and before making any application of it we must know what the author means by the word "nature" and "natural." He writes of the constitution and course of nature, and if we ask what he means by these words, he informs us that "the only distinct meaning of the word 'natural' is stated, fixed, or settled;" the visible known course of things appears to us natural. For there seems scarce any other possible sense to be put upon the word, but that only in which it is here used; "similar, stated, or uniform." We need not proceed further with Butler's argument. It is the principle we are concerned with; the method he adopts, and which, whether well or ill applied in particular cases, is in itself a satisfactory and unimpeachable method. The greater part of all knowledge is acquired by comparison and likeness; we have learned the name of some object, and on seeing another object of similar appearance we apply the same name to it, and experience teaches us to correct our hasty conclusions, and to discover differences which were not at first discernible. Butler declines to inquire into the grounds on which it is that likeness begets so full a conviction, one which, he says, is necessarily produced in everyone. We may with advantage consult Mr. Herbert Spencer on the subject; in the second edition of his "Principles of Psychology," he treats of it in a full and comprehensive manner. Chapter XXIV. discusses "the relations of

likeness and unlikeness," and proceeds thus—"Continued analysis has brought us down to the relations underlying not only all preceding relations, but all processes of thought whatever. From the most complex and the most abstract inferences down to the most rudimentary intuition, all intelligence proceeds by the establishment of relations of *likeness* and *unlikeness*."—"The classification of objects, we found to imply a perception of the *likeness* of a new group of relations to a before known group, joined with more or less *unlikeness* of the individual attributes. . . . And we further saw that the perception of a special object is impossible save by thinking of it as *like* some before known class or individual." And Professor Jevons in his "Principles of Science," says—"The fundamental action of our reasoning faculties consists in inferring or carrying to a new instance of a phenomenon whatever we have previously known of its like, analogue, equivalent, or equal. Sameness or identity presents itself in all degrees, and is known under various names; but the great rule of inference embraces all degrees, and affirms that so far as there exists sameness, identity or likeness, what is true of one thing will be true of the other."

Butler's process is an example and application of this fundamental principle of our mental constitution; we can only learn and understand one thing as we have previously become acquainted with another; and it is because one thing is more or less like another that we infer some further resemblance, and the correctness of our inference depends at last upon the exactness of our observation.

The datum line from which Butler starts is the "constitution and course of nature;" and nature, he tells us, is what is "stated, fixed, or settled;" that order and framework of things with which we are acquainted, which we "find ourselves under." And here it is important to notice that it is not the absolute order of things which is to form the basis of measurement, but what we "find

ourselves under," what is "stated, fixed, and settled," so far as our experience reaches. We only "know in part" (1 Cor. xiii. 9); and what appeared "stated, fixed, and settled" in former ages has that character no longer. So far as men are concerned, the constitution of nature is that order of things which has impressed itself on their minds. They thought, for thousands of years, that the earth was a plane and immovable, and that the sun moved; the whole framework of their belief on this subject has been overturned, their senses told them that some change took place, which was true, but their inference from it was erroneous. Not in this respect only, but in hundreds of others, the constitution and course of nature has seemed to one generation a very different thing to what it has seemed to another; and as the apprehension of it may yet undergo very great changes, what may be the ultimate, true and final interpretation of it cannot be determined, and therefore if, as Butler proposes, we are to infer "from that part of Divine Government which comes under our view, to that larger and more general government which is beyond," we must be very careful that we do not misinterpret that part which comes under our view, seeing it is by this we are to judge of that "which is beyond." Let us take an example from Butler himself; he says, "The numerous seeds of vegetables and bodies of animals, which are adapted and put in the way to improve to such a point or state of natural maturity and perfection, we do not see, perhaps, that one in a million actually does. For the greatest part of them decay before they are improved to it, and appear to be absolutely destroyed." . . . "And I cannot forbear adding, though it is not to the present purpose, that the *appearance* of such an amazing *waste* in nature, with respect to these seeds and bodies, by foreign causes, is to us unaccountable, as, what is much more terrible, the present and future ruin of so many moral agents by themselves, *i.e.* by vice."

The ruin of these moral agents is assumed and substantiated by the analogy of nature's waste in the destruction of seeds, &c. Now, suppose that the destruction, as Butler calls it, of seeds is a natural operation, and that instead of their being "absolutely destroyed," as he assumes, those which decay subserve altogether as important and useful purposes in the economy of nature as those which "improve." According to his notion of "perfection," the hypothesis of the ruin of moral agents loses this analogical proof; and we must not overlook the fact that Butler claims this analogy on the ground of "appearance"; and as this appearance may be wholly false and deceitful, other appearances equally relied upon may be also fanciful and fallacious. The constitution and course of nature is something actual and real. What men and generations of men have thought of it is no proof that they thought correctly; and if not, then the conclusions or analogies they discovered are even less to be relied upon; they may indeed be "baseless as the fabric of a vision." Once assume, which is far more probable, that every part and particle of nature has a predetermined place and purpose, and Butler's notion of "waste" altogether disappears. We only "know in part"; he builds up an argument which he admits to be "terrible" upon an hypothesis which may be utterly untenable: the constitution and course of nature he may have wholly misinterpreted and misunderstood, and it may furnish no proof or probability whatever in support of his argument.

In the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans we have another example of a false analogy which often leads to a mistaken inference.—"Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, &c.?"

Now, the comparison or analogy in this case altogether fails: the writer argues that because a "thing" may be used after any fashion that its owner pleases, so may a man; but unless the attributes of a man and the attributes of a thing are the same, there is no real analogy. In his "Aids to Reflection," Coleridge says, "Morality commences with, and begins in, the sacred distinction between thing and person; on this distinction all law, human and divine, is grounded." The distinction between a person and a thing is so well understood and so fundamental that no proof of it need be given; it is, however, succinctly stated in a recent popular treatise—"The Science of Law," by Sheldon Amos—"The true opposite of a person is a thing"—"The primitive notions with which the law deals are persons and things"—"A person . . . is only known to the law as a centre round which a number of rights and duties gather, and who is hypothetically in possession of the moral and mental faculties needed to enjoy the rights and perform the duties."

Now, if it is argued that because its possessor may do what he likes with a thing, he may, therefore, do what he likes with a person, we at once resent the comparison and deny the analogy. Whether it be right for an infinite being to treat human beings as mere lifeless clay, we do not inquire; we say, it is not proved to be right because such power exists over inanimate clay; the clay, no doubt, may be moulded and fashioned according to its owner's fancy; a human being may not be so dealt with. No tribunal on earth would allow the validity of such an analogy. In the worst of times, when slaves were not allowed the privilege of persons, they were never actually degraded into things; so that if it is attempted to justify an arbitrary proceeding with human beings on the ground that such proceeding is allowable with inert matter, the argument is invalid because the analogy is false. Hath not the potter power over the clay? Yes. Shall the thing formed say to him who formed it, Why hast thou

made me thus? No; because it is a thing. But in neither case is the reasoning applicable to persons; the clay has no rights and duties, and the person has; mere "power" may determine the destiny of clay, but something more than power must "shape the ends" of human beings. We are not assuming to deal with the whole argument; we only say "the constitution and course of nature" gives men power over clay to do what they will with it; but it does not give them such power over human beings, and any argument is false which bases itself on the similarity of persons and things, and infers that as mere power is sufficient to deal with the one, it is sufficient also to deal with the other. As a matter of fact, in some other state of being persons and things may be confounded together; but an argument based upon the analogies of this world is mistaken and misleading which implies that because unrestrained rights exist here over inert clay they therefore exist over human beings. Our beliefs may be capable of proof, and we may seek to strengthen a proof by false analogies; the analogies, however, must be rejected, though the proof may remain; but too often the weak proof is corroborated by the apparent analogy, and passes current on the strength of the analogy; and it is this source of error we have specially to guard against. Parents may have existed who thought they had uncontrolled and unlimited power over their children because they had such power over their trees and dwellings, and following out Butler's argument they might have concluded that whoever had equal power over the human race had a right to exercise it in any manner that he pleased; but as soon as such parents are taught the true relation between themselves and their children, they know that their power is limited and restrained; every year narrows the limits of mere power, and substitutes for it the higher notion of right; the community circumscribes continually the individual impulse, and if we assume any principle of action as right in some superior being

because it is thought right in man, we must be quite sure that our principle is truly and finally settled and approved by man's highest and most developed intelligence. "'Tis excellent to have a giant's strength, but tyrannous to use it like a giant." Men are not allowed to have uncontrolled power over dumb animals: they may kill, but not torture them: a brute has rights, the clay has none; and all men come to acknowledge this, though at some time it may not have been recognized.

When the constitution and course of nature was thought to justify the "butchering" of men and animals to make a "holiday" for other men, it might be thought justifiable for a god to deal similarly with the whole human race. But such an analogy is exploded; men have no right to treat their fellows after this fashion, nor can the fact that such treatment is at any time common and customary be pleaded in justification of similar treatment in another sphere. Butler himself, for another purpose, argues, "The destruction of a vegetable is an event not similar or analogous to the destruction of a living agent, because one of the two subjects compared is wholly void of that which is the principal and chief thing in the other—the power of perception and of action." (Analogy, chap. I.)

We see, then, that before we can found an argument upon analogy we must know that the things compared have similar attributes; we cannot penetrate the unknown by false analogies derived from the known. If the constitution and course of nature here and now is to help us in forming conceptions of what may be elsewhere and hereafter, it is indispensable that we understand perfectly and interpret accurately the things that are to guide our hopes and expectations; and if this is true of the visible course of events in the world, it is also true of the words and symbols by which the past and the future are brought before our minds. We read written and printed words, but we only know what they mean as we are acquainted

with the things for which they stand ; and if we have had no experience of the things we can have no real knowledge of the words ; we must be able to compare the words and the things before we can be sure that we know the meaning of a proposition : though a predication is made in words it has no validity unless it corresponds with the represented things. In the 8th chapter of Deuteronomy, Palestine is described as a “land out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass ;” and in the 28th of Job we read, “brass is molten out of stone.” Now, as brass is a compound metal, neither of these statements is accurate : the translators may be in error in rendering the word ; but this does not affect the principle. The proposition is a plain and intelligible one, and is only known to be erroneous by our acquaintance with the mode in which brass is made. Again, assertions are made respecting the habits of the ant : but the truth of the assertions can only be known when the facts are known ; no theory respecting the words will avail us—the question is, what are the facts ? and when these are ascertained, the words must be modified and maintained as they correspond or otherwise with the facts.

Another example of a more comprehensive character will illustrate our meaning more completely. In the 18th chapter of the 1st of Kings we have an account of an interview between Elijah and Obadiah. Elijah addressing Obadiah says, “Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here ;” on which Obadiah replies, “As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee : and when they said, He is not there, he took an oath of the kingdom and nation that they found thee not.”

An ingenuous person reading this story and knowing nothing from other sources of “the constitution and course of nature” would suppose that a man of Obadiah's character who feared the Lord from his youth, was

speaking only the literal truth, especially when he introduces his assertion with the solemn words "As the Lord thy God liveth;" and yet we know that what he says is merely hyperbole and exaggeration. And how do we know this? because we know that the world is a much larger place than Obadiah had any notion of, that its inhabitants have always spoken various languages, that only very few persons in the world knew Elijah, and that however arbitrary Ahab might have been, he was not so foolish as to send out emissaries on so bootless a mission. And yet Obadiah's assertion is most circumstantial—he took an oath of the kingdom and nation. We may modify and rebate the assertions; but what then? We do so because we know they will not bear to be literally interpreted; and we know this by our acquaintance with certain facts, and not from any light derived from the words. If the words related to persons and things of which we have had no experience and which are beyond the sphere of our observation, we might interpret them literally, and we should err not less egregiously, though quite unwittingly; we should have nothing to check our inference by. If a police officer were to make an affidavit in a court of law that there was no corporate town in England which he had not visited in search of an offender, and if moreover he said that the chief constable in each town had made an affidavit that no such person was or had been there—he might be believed, because we know the thing is not impossible; it might be done, and we might believe the proposition as being consonant with our knowledge; but when an assertion goes beyond the bounds of our knowledge and the words of it represent things and states of mind we have had no experience of, we can give no intelligent assent to it, and we may allege and think we believe what is utterly absurd, because the propositions cannot be apprehended in their reality; we know only the words, and unless we

can check them by actual knowledge of the things, derived from some other source we may assent to what is contradictory and absurd.

It is impossible to conceive any statement more full and more circumstantial than this of Obadiah's, introduced as it is by a form of oath, and by a man of integrity and uprightness. *A priori* we should say that such a man's solemn statement made under such special circumstances might be relied upon in all its details; and if we knew none of the details and had no means of testing them, our information as to Obadiah's character would incline us to believe what he said; but when we know the particular facts he is speaking about, we at once refuse our assent to the literal meaning of his words; but we only refuse this assent because we know from other sources what is involved in his observation.

Let us now suppose that there is language in the Bible which describes a universal deluge, and suppose we know from other sources that such a deluge cannot have occurred; we restrict and retrench this language as we restrict the language of Obadiah. Again, suppose that the Bible describes the creation of the world as a recent event which took place in a particular manner, and in a very limited time. If we discover by other means that the world has been in course of formation for myriads of ages, and that it was peopled in quite another way and at a much remoter era than the Book asserts, then the constitution and course of nature must govern our conclusions and not the ambiguous words of a very venerable document; if there be the widest possible discrepancy between the Book's account of the origin of man, and the facts of his history registered on the walls and floors of his habitation, we must believe the latter evidence rather than the former, because it is clearer, plainer, and more authentic. We believed the words while we had no other means of information; but when we could explore the strata of the earth and found there unimpeachable evidence

of an antiquity that was altogether at variance with the information contained in the Book, we had no alternative but to rely upon the older document. We may shut our eyes to the evidence, but we do not by this means invalidate it, and the time will arrive when—come what come may—this evidence will be as universally believed as is the evidence of the earth's revolution and rotundity. The evidence of words relating to the facts of nature is not so strong and convincing as the evidence of the facts themselves; the antiquity of the world and the antiquity of man are proved by evidence that is irrefragable, and the evidence of some words written in a comparatively recent age cannot overrule the evidence of facts which contradict the words. The constitution and course of nature is our datum line, any system of things which corresponds to this may be true; but one that contradicts it cannot claim our assent when the complete evidence is before us.

The mode of interpretation here indicated is constantly though perhaps unconsciously observed. We find moral precepts in the Book very wide and comprehensive in their terms, and we rebate them. "Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself" is an injunction wholly opposed to our modern habits, and it is quite disregarded; a man who does not take thought for the morrow is reckoned improvident and blamable. One of the greatest and gravest faults of our labouring classes is that they do not take thought for the morrow, but leave it to take thought for the things of itself; provident societies, insurance offices, savings' banks, and all kindred institutions are created and maintained by the men who take thought for the morrow. Although there have been men who governed themselves by the Book exclusively, who denounced this care-taking and future-forestalling spirit, the constitution and course of nature prevailed; and the precepts that command non-resistance, submission to injuries, and the like, are made to bend to the circumstances of the world.

Read as literally as we have been accustomed to read the story of the deluge, these precepts would altogether disorganise the arrangements of society ; and so society deeming it indispensable that the affairs of the world should be intelligently directed according to the lights of experience, treats these precepts as tropes and figures ; the words are subordinated to the things. But it is curious to observe how words quite as unmanageable which increased the power and importance of the clerical class have been allowed to keep their literal signification, although they contradict the constitution and course of nature as completely as any we have been considering. The words which bade the disciples "take neither purse nor scrip nor two coats," are as plain and precise as those which say, "Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted," &c. But whilst the latter are retained as a part of their charter by Romanists, they altogether disavow the former ; and then they build the most mysterious dogma of religion upon a few words, and decline to admit a figurative interpretation, as it would deprive them of a wonder-working power. The words "This is my body" have no higher evidence than the material bread to which they refer ; the senses apprehend the words, and the senses also apprehend the thing ; and, if the thing contradicts the meaning you put upon the words, the words as embodying the weaker evidence fall to the ground, are to be construed understandingly : "This is"—*i.e.* represents—"my body" : "I am the door" *i.e.*—represent it.

In Isaiah's time, men worshipped wooden idols, and no doubt there was connected with them a halo of traditions, temples, a gorgeous ritual, music, and priestly influences ; and the people probably regarded the worship and its surroundings with a certain reverence and awe. What was actual and palpable was sublimated by what was ideal and imaginative, and the evidence of sense was set aside and despised in the blaze and fervour of devotion. But these things did not impose upon Isaiah ; and in the

bluntest and most offensive manner, and with a minute and sarcastic iteration, he describes how and by whom the idol had been made,—the smith with the tongs, the carpenter with a line;—he depicts and delineates every step of the process, he shows how the work has been done, and that there is nothing occult in it; “he heweth him down cedars;” “he burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. They have not known nor understood: and none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it; and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?” (Isaiah xlv.)

Every word of this description may be applied to transubstantiation: the process of growing and preparing and cooking the wheat, the artificers who are engaged in it, its physical features and effects, all have their counterpart in Isaiah’s picture; and his interrogation and denunciation are not one whit less applicable. With part I made starch or paste or any other of the thousand things for which wheat is available, and with the residue—“he maketh a god; he falleth down unto it and worshippeth it; and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for though art my god.” The analogy is painfully accurate and close; and that which rendered the thing possible in Isaiah’s time renders a similar thing possible now. There is neither “knowledge nor understanding,” “none considereth in his heart,” and he is “deceived” and hath

“ a lie in his right hand,” because he lacks knowledge and understanding. The instruments of knowledge with which his Creator has endowed him,—his senses and reason—he disavows and distrusts, and he accepts a “ blind guide,” who has an interest in keeping up a false system, “ and has a lie in his right hand.”

The argument of Isaiah is irresistible when it addresses knowledge and understanding. Words may mislead ; facts have a greater cogency ; this is a wooden idol ; this is a piece of bread ; the constitution and course of nature testify to the facts and their implications, and the words must yield to the dominion of the things. To “ know,” to “ consider,” to “ understand ”—these are the safeguards which are to deliver men from the perilous folly of believing lies—of believing what has no basis of fact, no correspondence with the constitution and course of nature. Men may discover the meaning of nature or not as they please, they may, if they please, live in regions of unreality, they may renounce the right of private judgment, and hand over their intellectual and moral nature to the disposal of another ; but no contrivance, no “ voluntary humility ” (Col. ii. 18), and no abdication of their function, no renunciation of “ knowledge and understanding,” no believing and thinking by deputy, will stand instead of the considering heart that looks at real things in their native garb, and values them at exactly what they are worth in the currency and work of the world.

By a man who had lived his life long in a remote village—who had never known or understood—Obadiah's story so solemnly vouched for would have been received with an easy credulity. There was no help for it. The man knew no better ; the King was irresistible, he had sent everywhere, and taken oaths of all ; why should he not ? In his unenlightened eyes the King was a person of unbounded power, who could do as he pleased ; but to a man who knew Egypt, and Greece, and Italy, and Britain, and the Baltic, Ahab's vaunting was mere vain-glorious-

ness,—a flagrant imposition, utterly incredible and impossible; mere Oriental extravagance; and not one whit more believable because Obadiah had been deceived by it, and gave his solemn assurance of its truth.

And this remote villager is relatively in the position of much more important persons. Measured against the infinities, these persons—Popes, Cardinals, Councils—are but as this ignorant rustic; nay, they are much less; and in asserting peremptorily, as they do, that infinite things and relations are adequately represented through the poor mechanism of words, and that these poor words are the true and real exponents of what is invisible and inscrutable, they are more presumptuous than any untravelled villager is ever likely to be.

We may apply this reasoning and these facts to the popular doctrine of future punishment. What was thought a rightful method of dealing with rational, emotional, and imperfect beings at one era of the world's history was thought a barbarous and cruel method at another. The men who are so enamoured of antiquity should remember its arenas, wild beasts, thumb-screws, inquisitions, slavery and brutality; if its doctrines, its creeds and its devotions, were compatible with such practices, we may safely distrust its conclusions on moral questions. The constitution and course of nature repudiate its methods and reject its reasonings.

It was not thought unreasonable, as we have seen, that a human being should be put on the same level as the clay of a potter; his superior was presumed to hold over him the same rights that the owner of inert clay possesses over it: and we need only look at the judicial proceedings of the world, at the punishments it inflicted, and at the logic of its proceedings, to discern that an unfortunate human being who violated the conventions of society was a mere outcast, who might be made to suffer any loss or anguish with impunity and approval. In such a state of society a wrongdoer might be an

Ishmaelite, treated as mere offal, whom no one cared for; everlasting punishment to the moral feelings of such an age would seem as reasonable as the judicial cruelty that was everywhere in vogue; the teaching and the practice were of a piece; the constitution and course of nature seemed on the side of endless and unmitigated severity; rigour was the rule; mercy the exception. In these modern days society stands aghast when a man, though a nobleman, challenges for himself the right to do as he likes with his own—even his property; and he is told, property has its duties as well as its rights. Society is now horrified that a man should be allowed to “whop his own nigger” without check or limit. It once regarded these matters with complete indifference, and it listened without remonstrance to a teacher who argued that a human being and a piece of inert clay were subject to the same rule of ownership: but the times are changed; crime is now treated with a certain humaneness; criminals are cared for; society concerns itself about them: “considers” how they became what they are, and how they may be raised and recovered; metes out to them a curative discipline; teaches them, and in short makes punishment subordinate to improvement; an instrument to save, and not an executioner to destroy. The time may come—nay, it is certain to do so—when to take the life of a criminal will be regarded with horror; when it will be seen that calm legal authority is sanctioning the brutal remedies which constitute criminality. As Shylock says, “The villany you teach me, I will execute; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.” When society was cruel and oppressive, cruelty and oppression seemed to be the constitution and course of nature: “When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things.” (1 Cor. xiii. 11.) People will not remember that the world was once in a state of

childhood, and to a large extent it is so now; and that what it "thought and understood" in childhood must be put away as it grows into manhood; and the vindictiveness that characterizes childhood, its conflicting passions and impetuosity, most of all need to be put away. The aspects of childhood are manifold, in some most beautiful and to be imitated; but that which in childhood has been "thought and understood" must (much of it) be put away; and its notion of punishment is one of the things that must be put away: as much of it has already been put away. Go through our gaols, our lunatic asylums, our reformatories, and our common elementary schools, and in every one of these places the old vindictive and cruel methods are being "put away;" the constitution and course of nature has entered upon a new phase; and it becomes incredible to those who know and consider it, that "vengeance" should ever have been regarded as the impulse and measure of punishment. The men of a generation speak the language of their generation; they see what it sees, and feel as it feels, and their analogies are all based upon what they see and know and feel. Plainly and undeniably they have thought in times past that "whosoever killed did God service" (John xvi. 2), and that it was "natural" for God to be such as they were; they did not know they were cruel, that their acts were savage and barbarous, and they transferred such ways of thinking and acting to their gods, and thought them conformable to the constitution and course of nature. In a community where crime is reckoned and treated as a disease, where its antecedents are regarded, and where appropriate methods are applied to its extinction, the reasoning of a man who was actuated by mere "vengeance" would be horrible and incomprehensible, would be in fact looked upon as we should look upon methods of treating disease such as once prevailed among savages.

The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom He loves.
The pleasure house is dust ; behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom,
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.
She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are and have been may be known ;
But at the coming of a milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.
One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows and what conceals,
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.*

Now, suppose that the constitution and course of nature as truly discerned should repudiate the old notion and practice of punishment, and suppose that in the Book there is language on the subject which is repugnant to what is "natural," viz. "stated, fixed, or settled," we must modify the words of the Book and bring them into accordance with the more authoritative teaching. And now let us hear what the Book says on the subject—"That servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." (Luke xii. 47, 48.)

Beating with stripes may be a figurative expression, and may imply, as it plainly does, corrective and punitive discipline ; and it is measured by the opportunities and knowledge of the servant ; the indiscriminate sentence of modern theology has no place here, but a rational law of justice ; the stripes are to be few or many according to the knowledge and disposition of the servant. But "few or many" are utterly irrelevant words, where everlasting punishment is meted out ; few or many—much or little—

* Wordsworth : "Hart Leap Well."

have no application where there are only sheep and goats: where these "go into everlasting punishment," those "into life eternal." A clear principle, at one with the constitution and course of nature, must construe a parable that is inconsistent with it. The separation of mankind finally into two classes is incompatible with the principle of meting out a graduated punishment; and as a graduated punishment is the rule elsewhere, and satisfies more completely the requirements of the constitution and course of nature as developed by the later and higher jurisprudence, we have no alternative but to regard the parable as inculcating kindness in general, and as in no sense determining the final condition of men.

A rule of distributive justice, which measures out punishment according to the light and opportunity possessed has everything to recommend it. The object of the strong and wise should be to teach and strengthen the weak, erring, and ignorant. To crush and destroy them, to torture and to afflict them, in mere vindictiveness, was intelligible once; but it is so no longer; the course of nature rebels against and resents it; the clay of the potter may be handled after any fashion, a rational being may not be so.

If it be said that Divine justice is a thing we do not understand, we ask by what right does any man presume to say that it is something repugnant to human notions of justice? If it cannot be understood or known, how then can anything be predicated of it? If I can know nothing of it, how then can you know? How can it be said that anyone is just, when the word justice represents an unknown quality? We need not adopt Mill's crushing criticism upon Mansel; we may take that of Coleridge. In his "Aids to Reflection" he says, "I ask you, is this justice a moral attribute? If you attach any meaning to the term justice, as applied to God, it must be the same to which you refer when you affirm or deny it of any

other personal agent, save only, that in its attribution to God you speak of it as unmixed and perfect. For if not, what do you mean? And why do you call it by the same name? I may, therefore, with all right and reason, put the case as between man and man. For should it be found irreconcilable with justice, which the Light of Reason, made law in the conscience, dictates to man, how much more must it be incougruous with the all-perfect justice of God?"

As illustrating the same principle St. Luke furnishes another example (vii. 41):—"A certain creditor had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged."

Here is no mystification—a plain man is asked a plain question: the constitution and course of nature is appealed to; under the specified circumstances what will come to pass? The men have nothing to pay; then certainly theology replies they must find a surety or a ransom: nothing of the kind; the creditor frankly forgives; no one pays him anything, and his generosity is rewarded by the love of his debtors. "Love is the fulfilling of the law," and lays the foundation of further moral growth and excellence. Make what you like of other teaching, this apologue and its moral cannot be mistaken.

One more illustration, which St. Matthew furnishes, may be quoted *in extenso*; for the story, though so well known, will bear repeating.

Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord

commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence : and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not : but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me : shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee ? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

The persons who listened to this story were the “ common people,” “ unlearned and ignorant men,” whose judgment in these days is despised ; “ this people who know not the law is cursed ” (John vii. 49) ; what acquaintance have they with theology, with the decrees of Councils, the writings of the Fathers, and all the tomes that fill the shelves of learned divines ? Very little. Nevertheless, the Divine Master spoke the words of this parable, and meant His hearers to understand it, and they could hardly fail to do so ; it does not need a Latin commentary to make it plain, all the apparatus of Biblical criticism can hardly obscure its transparent simplicity :— there is a King and his servants, there is a debt and no means of paying it ; the debtor sues for mercy, and the King, the lord of the servant, is moved with compassion, and looses him and forgives him the debt. These are all plain words and common things. Everybody knows what a debt is, and what compassion is, and what is meant by forgiving a debt ; but it is the application and the moral that touches us. “ The King,” says the Divine Master,

“represents my heavenly Father”—“who forgave thee all that debt”—why? “Because thou desiredst; therefore shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant even as I had pity on thee?” Pity and compassion were words which the hearers could not be mistaken about; the compassion toward the fellowservant was parallel to the pity of the King; they were not different things, but the same; the debt was not released because some one else had paid it, “but because thou desiredst me”—the servant is condemned because he was not animated by the same feeling as his Lord: “I forgave thee because thou desiredst me; shouldest not thou also have had compassion?” Compassion forgives and releases the debt on account of the debtor’s poverty and importunity; how recklessly he may have incurred the debt, how foolishly, or how dishonestly, avails not; “I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me.”

“Hath not the potter power over the clay?” The King does not ask this question; he doesn’t meet the cry for mercy by reminding his unhappy debtor that he is but a piece of unorganised clay. Whatever may be the force of this comparison, these common people, who heard gladly, heard nothing of it, and they probably never heard of it: they never saw the Epistle to the Romans, they never saw the written Gospels, they heard certain kindly words, and no doubt felt they were consistent with their unsophisticated feelings; it seemed to them considerate and compassionate that a man should forgive his debtor when he was in the unhappy condition of having nothing to pay. “I will arise and go to my father and say I have sinned”—am unworthy. “But the father put the best robe on him,” acting like a father, and not like a mere potter moulding clay. Such conduct was natural—according to the constitution and course of nature as it becomes developed under humane treatment; and the human images the Divine, whatever learned arguments theologians may frame to prove that debts cannot be forgiven without payment.

These words teach another lesson, which the theologians would do well to ponder; their meaning seems plain, and one would think that He who uttered them knew more of the subject than the theologians. These men despise the revelations of science, the knowledge that comes of comparing and reasoning. Whilst they seek to build up a science of theology, and reason about abstractions which have no existence and no relation to the actual constitution and course of nature, they confound moral distinctions, "calling evil good and good evil, putting sweet for bitter and bitter for sweet" (Isaiah v. 20). Bitter and sweet are not hard to distinguish by plain men, and it is by a human taste only that they can be judged. Man's faculties and powers are the sole instruments by which he can determine the qualities of things; and what their quality is to him is for all practical purposes their real quality; but then a man's taste may be vitiated by a "false philosophy," by science falsely so called, which is the precise organ that has been employed to create the metaphysics of theology; abstract reasoning derived from and combined with the method of Aristotle. The science which discovers the constitution and course of nature is despised and contemned; but the pseudo-science of St. Thomas Aquinas is the supreme arbiter of earth and heaven; in the hands of these reasoners the Divine Father became indeed a "hard master," but then they kept in their own hands the means of conciliating Him, and unhappy men were bound to resort to them for the medicine to cure their misery. The system has tintured the entire substance of the subsequent theology; a few men threw off a portion of the yoke, but the system is concatenated by an iron logic: it hated reason, which it enslaved, and was then enslaved by it. What is there which deserves the name of "science falsely so called" if it be not the metaphysics incorporated with Christian belief from the bottomless philosophies of ancient times? The current moral reasoning ignores the actual condition of the world, and is built upon abstractions which contravene the con-

stitution and course of nature. "The moral sense grows but by exercise." * "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" (Jeremiah xiii. 2). Surely not, and are the Ethiopian and the leopard blamable because they cannot do so? Is a man blamable in the sense of being punishable for ever, because he was created under a law of habit which imperceptibly and irresistibly binds him, or because he is influenced by example, by precept, by the make of his mind and the taint of his blood? If so he is equally punishable for lameness, for imbecility, and for scrofulous tendencies. The constitution and course of nature brings him into the world, and the world has a constitution and a course to which he must adapt himself, and he is hurt that he may learn, though he may have been so badly placed that he could not learn. But is it probable that the opportunity will be never afforded to him? It never was afforded here; traditions and abstractions and perversions may condemn him to everlasting torment, but analogy does not support the conclusion; and human feeling—by which only we can interpret the Divine—cannot receive it.

"How can they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" There are those who have not heard, and who are therefore unable to believe,—how can they believe? and is there no impossibility but that of not having heard? Surely there are other impossibilities as great as this. There is the impossibility of believing what is taught and described as a Gospel of good tidings, which might have been believed in days when men were silenced by an argument that put moral agents on a level with inert clay, but which is incredible now. Moral agents have risen in the world; the things of the middle ages—racks and thumb-screws—are obsolete; the new conditions and relations which have sprung up will sweep away and destroy other inhumanities of the past; and it will not much longer be believed that moral agents who are born blind and deaf

* Robert Browning.

and mute are therefore doomed to endless and unutterable woe because of something they had nothing to do with, and a constitution of things they had no control over. "How can they believe" this? "God made the country and man made the town," says Cowper; God also made man and nature, but man wrote and interpreted and translated the Book; we can go to the original, the book of nature, and read there, and compare the results with the manuscript of man. Put the authority of the Book as high as you please: it was written with hands and expressed in human language; the language "graven with an iron pen" in the living facts of nature, is less liable to be corrupted.

A writer in the "Contemporary Review" has recently written several prolix and dreary articles in support of the old theology, in which he lays great stress upon the words, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." This abstract proposition is more to him than all the facts and analogies to be found in the world and the Book; as if the same Book had not in it the words—"He dwelleth in the light to which no man can approach, whom no man hath seen or can see;" and as if all such phraseology was not an accommodation to the circumstances of men.

Lo! the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
Sees God in trees and hears him in the wind.

Hamlet. My father,—methinks I see my father.

Hor. O, where, my lord?

Hamlet. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

And thus it is that men see God. That they should see Him after a bodily fashion is a gross materialism; they see Him when they see His work and His moral government; when they discern His operations on the platform of this earth—"through a glass darkly"—and then more and more perfectly—or as we may say, face to face:

O Thou,—as represented here to me
In such conception as my soul allows,—
Under Thy measureless my atom width.*

* Robert Browning.

Theology of old entered into an unfortunate alliance with metaphysics, and has bequeathed to us, in consequence, interminable discussions respecting the bondage of the will and other kindred subjects. If we get rid of the implications involved in the word "will," and speak of man as a moral and rational being, acted upon by motives and improved by cultivation, we have a definite subject before us. We have grounds for believing that, furnished with proper knowledge and swayed by reasonable motives, man would act suitably to his condition; that it is possible to furnish him with knowledge and to influence him by motives; that he goes wrong from bad teaching and training as often as from any other cause; and therefore that in the main his state is one calling for compassion more than for vengeance. Pain is the instrument by which he is taught pleasure; the instrument by which he is moved. To this view of the case corresponds the statement contained in the 11th chapter of Matthew—where it is said of Chorazin and Bethsaida, "If the mighty works, which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes;" and of Sodom that "it would have remained until this day;" and that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for one of the Jewish cities. Now, what is implied in this? How can there be more or less tolerableness where all are reduced to one unvarying level of everlasting torment—where there are only sheep and goats, and nothing intermediate? or how—if men *would* have repented,—the information and the motives being offered to them—can "compassion and pity" leave them for ever in the "outer darkness" because they had the misfortune to be born where and when they could not see the light? What we call compassion would not act thus; and if there be a thing called compassion which is not what we know by that name, then it is "a delusion and a snare" to apply to it the same word: the thing meant

by the word is a certain frame of feeling and mode of acting under given circumstances ; if the feeling and the action do not correspond with the circumstances something different is meant and should be indicated by another word. "How can they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" and to believe in something of which we have never heard and have had no knowledge, is not a greater impossibility than to believe in what contradicts our knowledge and confounds our moral perceptions.

Men often perplex themselves with abstract reasoning upon plain questions, and thus involve themselves in endless difficulties. Evidence is always a matter of degree ; one sort of evidence is more to be relied upon than another ; and the written words of men who were not eye witnesses or who might have been imposed upon by the imperfection of their faculties or opportunities is not equal to the evidence which is original and present and capable of being now handled and tested. Herbert Spencer says,* "The astronomer who has, through the elaborate quantitative reasonings which we call calculations, concluded that a transit of Venus will commence on a certain day, hour and minute, and who on turning a telescope to the sun at that time sees no black spot entering on its disc, infers an untruth in his calculations—not an untruth in those relatively brief and primitive acts of thought which make up his observation." And just so the simple problems worked out by common and real analogies are more to be trusted than elaborate reasonings based upon transcendental and unfathomable mysteries.

Once more the question presents itself, and cannot be shut out—Is the history of man current in theological circles, or his history as disclosed by the constitution and course of nature, the true one? Is the history of creation in the Book of Genesis a true history, or a mythical one? Are the facts, the bones, the implements, the handwriting upon the wall—are these so many impositions, tricks

* Principles of Psychology, vol. ii.—General Analysis.

palmed off upon man to mislead and to mystify him; or is it true that men lived upon the earth millions of years ago, and did not arrive here in the mode and manner that theology has taught? Upon the answer to these questions many present and past systems of theology depend: upon which side does the evidence preponderate? The Book has been written by men under circumstances not known now, and may be misunderstood by us; the facts of nature may also be misunderstood; but their language is less ambiguous, less liable to misconception, and is absolutely without any bias; it is "without partiality and without hypocrisy:" can we say the same of transcribers and interpreters? Words, moreover, are opaque bodies which only shine as light is reflected upon them from some other quarter; the constitution and course of nature must be their interpreter, as it speaks a language that is "incorruptible and undefiled." The evidence of a book is what the lawyers call hearsay evidence: the evidence of facts is original evidence at first hand, and is the highest and most unimpeachable that the human mind can be influenced by. Experience has taught men what sort of evidence can and ought to be relied on in conducting the business of the world; and such as the evidence is in these practical affairs such it is in all affairs. Errors may be propagated everywhere; men may fall into them however careful they may be; but they are safer in one road than another; we are safest when dealing with "that which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled" (1 John i. 1). Men may seek to discredit this sort of evidence, but when they do so it is mostly because the evidence discredits some theory of their own. Butler accredits a revelation in proportion as its words correspond with the constitution and course of nature; when this continuity is broken, when they do not adjust themselves to each other, the evidence grounded upon

words is *pro tanto* weakened. If the world was not fabricated in six days according to the Book of Genesis, but by the slow and gradual operation of causes now at work around us; if the men and things upon the world came there by a process never thought of by those who looked only at the words; if the facts as disclosed by one kind of evidence are incompatible with the facts as set forth by another;—the facts supported by the strongest evidence must prevail. And if the facts be as they are told by the rocks and strata of the earth, then the Book has misled or men have erred in their interpretation of it. If an exposition can be suggested that harmonises the words and the things, it is not the less true that the words in their plain and natural signification have propagated a delusion, have been by generations of men—learned and unlearned—misunderstood, have been misapprehended, and have originated inferences which were not justified and were not true; and the right reading of the words has only been discerned by the light of facts which have shone upon us from the page of nature. If the plain words which describe the creation of the world and the fall of man need to have a gloss put upon them before they will square with the record of the rocks and the strata and the tools and the organic remains embedded in them, what must be said of the language which describes events and conditions that have never been brought within the range of human intelligence except by the shadowy instrumentality of words? The things represented by the words have never been realised, only idealised; and experience tells us that ideals which have no reals to rest upon may vary indefinitely from the truth. The ideal history of the creation, history delineated in words—that which no human eye had seen and no human hands had handled—can only have a visionary existence, may appear to the mind in forms and colours wholly unlike the reality. To create and to make, are operations essentially unlike; and yet if a mind is to be

informed of a creation it can only be in some terms or words that are familiar to it, by some analogies that it is acquainted with ; its own work must represent, however inadequately, what has to be presented for its apprehension ; and then as apprehension becomes clearer, as the intellectual faculty becomes acquainted with facts, it grows more and more conscious of the dimness and indistinctness of its original vision, and so revises its conceptions and substitutes new ones—a process which the mind must pass through while it exists, and is a growing and expanding intelligence. If in this world man is at the head of a hierarchy of intelligence and moral feeling, it is probable that another hierarchy is beyond and above him, into the ranks of which he will one day be transported, and commence a new career of progress, casting off at every step, but by infinitely slow degrees, the lower elements of his antecedent state. “That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural and afterwards that which is spiritual” (1 Cor. xv. 46). We are now in the region of the natural—law and sequence gradually discerned rule our nature, and we have within narrow limits a power of reaction ; but hereafter that which is spiritual will come—of its how and its where we know nothing, and we may err very egregiously in assimilating it to the past or the natural.

It is not easy to attach any meaning to the word “spiritual” as opposed to the word “natural ;” the latter word implying, according to Butler and also in accordance with exact usage, that which is settled and constant. Then, if we go back a single step, and ask by whom the course of things has been thus settled, we can only give one answer. The Creator of the world is the Author of Nature ; its constitution and course have been settled by Him, and He has given to man the faculties by which he can unravel its tissues, and interpret their working. Whatever other communication He has made to man, or may make, this must be evermore the one

from which real and reliable instruction can be gathered. So long as man can know his Creator's designs by the exercise of his own faculties so long it would seem the opportunity will be afforded, and the results may be depended upon. The Creator's works, subjective and objective, are correlatives; by whatever means the objective is brought within the circle of man's observation, the subjective bodies it forth, and giving to it form and colour apprehends it truly or not according as it uses rightly or otherwise the methods to which it is restricted. Man is not mechanically compelled to discern truly, but as his nature is cultivated he becomes a lover of truth, and seeks earnestly to overcome his inherited prejudices, his misconceptions and his mistakes; and his most hopeless condition is that of a self-satisfied, self-righteous Pharisee, who has "already attained, and is already perfect" (Phil. iii. 12) perhaps not in action, as he may confess, but assuredly in thought and in belief; his creed at any rate needs no repentance and no rectification.

The popular notions of the future life of man are of the most vague and unreal kind: everlasting happiness and rest, music and singing and emotional enjoyment, exalted to the highest state—this is what is depicted to Christian congregations, and is the staple of Christian expectation where any defined expectations are formed. But let us turn to the sober pages of Butler; he asserts that it is "just to argue from such facts as are known, to such as are like them; from that part of the Divine Government over intelligent creatures which comes under our view, to that larger and more general government over them which is beyond it; and from what is present, to collect what is likely, credible or not incredible, will be hereafter."

Now, at "present" the foundation of moral life is the family; out of the social relations spring all that gives worth and dignity to human beings; "if any provide not

for his own, . . . he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. v. 8). Provide—what things should he provide? Not food only and shelter; but whatever makes these things worth having—love, culture, training, family affection. Well, and are these things as nothing hereafter? having been the framework of the earthly fabric, are they to be thrown away as useless? The Creator now governs and regulates the world by family affections, by the love of brothers and sisters and husbands and wives, by their mutual support and mutual stimulus; this is "that part of the Divine government over intelligent creatures which comes under our view at present;" and we are entitled, according to Butler, to argue from the state of things here presented, and to collect from it, "what is likely, credible or not incredible, will be hereafter." It is not to be denied that on the other side this family relationship produces to us a grievous crop of sorrow and misfortune; we inherit the bad examples, the follies, and the disgrace of those who have gone before us; we bear a burden of disease which they have bequeathed to us, it circulates in our veins, it poisons and embitters our lives, and brings us to premature decay and death; but this also is natural.

Now, it would seem that a relationship such as this, felt everywhere, and binding together every member of the human family, can hardly have finished its course and completed its work within the limits of this world. And yet what is said of it in popular pulpits, or what place has it in any scheme of the region beyond? Again, it comes under our notice now, that men are possessed with an unquenchable energy, which grows and spreads from year to year, to help forward the fortunes of their less favoured fellows; a deeper and wider sympathy is being continually felt and manifested for the fallen and the forlorn. Is this altogether unknown in the world beyond? Family affection, has it there altogether failed? and man's love of his kind, is it, too, decayed and dead?

And the self-sacrifice that was ready to relinquish ease and enjoyment here, has it there forgotten all its ancient anxieties and yearnings?

There is the Throne of David,
And there from care released,
The shout of them that triumph,
The song of them that feast.

The "spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind"—has it evaporated and left only such a residuum as this? or rather is it not "likely" and "credible" that the distinguishing characteristics of humanity will remain for ever active and indelible? Otherwise, what becomes of personal identity? How is a man to know himself, when he has lost the base and substratum of his being? Is it not far more "likely" that the discipline undergone here is a process which forms dispositions and habits that will hold dominion, and shall have a congenial employment, so long as there is in God's universe aught to be recovered or reclaimed? The human race has a "last enemy," and it shall be "destroyed." (1 Cor. xv. 26.)

"They *would* have repented." And of whom may this not be said? Who is there that would not be happier than he is if he knew how—if his organisation and his surroundings had been other and better than they were? What man by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature? His physical stature is strictly limited by his nutritive system and his constitution; and his moral and mental stature—can he add a cubit to this? Physical impediments of some sort may be overcome, moral obstacles are more untractable; and it is easier—though it does not seem very easy—for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to escape the withering influence of his riches. If so, what is the parallel impossibility, and what the comparative hindrance, that besets the ignorant and friendless whom no man hath cared for? Good men "here" do their best to lighten the sore burdens that afflict mankind; they do not merely

deal out punishment and death. And is it "likely" or "credible,"—having regard to Butler's rule,—that what is "beyond" and "hereafter," will be so utterly repugnant to what "now comes under our view,"—what is "present" and "known"? How say you, Robert Browning?

After death

Life; man created new, ingeniously
Perfect for vindictive purpose now,
That man, first fashioned by beneficence,
Was proved a failure; intellect at length
Replacing old obtuseness, memory
Made mindful of delinquent's bygone deeds,
Now that remorse was vain, which lifelong lay
Dormant when lesson might be laid to heart;
New gift of observation up and down
And round man's self, new power to apprehend
Each necessary consequence of act
In man for well or ill—things obsolete—
Just granted to supplant the idiocy,
Man's guide while act was yet to choose,
And ill or well momentarily its fruit:
A faculty of immense suffering
Conferred on mind and body,—mind erewhile
Unvisited by one compunctious dream
During sin's drunken slumber, startled up,
Stung thro' and thro' by sin's significance,
Now that the body was abolished—just
As body which, alive, broke down beneath
Knowledge, lay helpless in the path to good,
Failed to accomplish aught legitimate,
Achieve aught worthy—which grew old in youth,
And at its longest fell a cut-down flower,—
Dying, this too revived by miracle
To bear no end of burden now that back
Supported torture to no use at all,
And live imperishably potent—since
Life's potency was impotent to ward
One plague off which made earth a hell before.
This doctrine, which one healthy view of things,
One sane sight of the general ordinance—
Nature—and its particular object—man—
Which one mere eye-cast at the character

Of Who made these and gave man sense to boot,
Had dissipated once and evermore,—
This doctrine I have dosed our flock withal.
Why? because none believed it. *They* desire
Such heaven and dread such hell, whom every day
The alehouse tempts from one, a dog fight bids
Defy the other.

THE UTILITARIAN THEORY OF MORALS.

A COLLOQUY.

Scene.—The Grounds at Wellesley House, Arkdale.

The Persons.—MR. LOCKSLEY and MR. TUDOR.

Mr. Tudor. I didn't see you on the moor this morning.

Mr. Locksley. I am afraid, in the first place, that I was rather lazy; and then I met Miss Hope in the garden, and was detained until it was too late to attempt the moor.

Mr. T. I fancy the detention was not disagreeable, for Miss Hope is a bright lively girl, and seems to be a favourite of yours?

Mr. L. I don't deny that she is a pleasant companion on these bright summer mornings, as she possesses both taste and enthusiasm.

Mr. T. I thought her taste in poetry rather questionable; for she tells me she prefers Longfellow to Tennyson.

Mr. L. Her reading of Tennyson has not been extensive, and at her age the superficial beauties of Longfellow may be more attractive than the subtler ones of Tennyson. She says that she often doesn't quite understand Tennyson; but I have read poems of his to her which she thoroughly appreciated.

Mr. T. Which is not surprising, as you probably selected what girls of her age would be sure to admire; but do you know that by the ladies of her acquaintance she is considered fickle and frivolous?

Mr. L. I am sorry to hear it; though I might perhaps venture to suggest that there are ladies in the world who

are not perfectly generous and just to the vivacity and warmth of feeling that are characteristic of—say sweet seventeen.

Mr. T. But it is precisely real warmth of feeling that is not conceded to her, they say she has no heart.

Mr. L. I thought I was a tolerable judge, but one may be deceived, for I must admit that if the ladies are sometimes sharp in their criticism of each other, they are mostly discriminating. Miss Hope asked some one a while ago to write out a list of her faults, and the enumeration commenced in this fashion—

“ I only note sweet gentle ways
And winning grace.”

So that I am not the only person who has been blind to her faults; but, after all, a very moderate amount of culpability may make up what is called in some quarters fickleness and frivolity.

Mr. T. Yes; the lines of demarcation are not always very clear, nor is it easy to say where what is blameless passes into what is blamable.

Mr. L. The names by which we distinguish objects serve well enough for common purposes, but the finer shades of meaning are not discriminated by them.

Mr. T. This is a defect of language for which allowance is seldom made, and yet it is at the root of our disagreements on many subjects.

Mr. L. It was pointed out plainly by Locke, in what remains the most interesting part of his “*Essay*.” The chapters on the “*imperfection of words*,” and on the “*abuse of words*,” are not less important now than when they were written. He says, “*in the interpretation of laws, whether human or divine, there is no end; comments beget comments, and explications make new matter for explications; and of limiting, distinguishing, varying, the signification of these moral words, there is no end. These ideas of men’s making are, by men still having the same power, multi-*

plied *in infinitum*."* This may still be said of the same subjects; our differences are as great as ever, and are likely to continue, so long as we do not mean the same thing by the same word.

Mr. T. When we speak of a visible or tangible object we can guard against any mistake in our meaning by producing the object and naming it, but when we speak of a thing which has only a mental existence, our ideas about it may differ without our knowing it.

Mr. L. Locke goes so far as to say "that morality is capable of demonstration as well as mathematics, since the precise real essence of the things moral words stand for may be perfectly known, and so the congruity or incongruity of the things themselves be certainly discovered, in which consists perfect knowledge."† So little progress has been made in this "demonstration" since Locke wrote his "Essay," that one might be inclined to believe the prospect he holds out is chimerical, if one did not recollect how long it usually takes to realise the ideals of sagacious and farseeing men—

Deep in Nature's undrain'd cornucopia
Every good that man seeks he shall find;
And to fools, only fools, is Utopia
The abode of the hopes of mankind.‡

Mr. T. How far the evils that afflict mankind are inevitable, and how far they are preventible, is not clear; the hopes of man, and the ideals that have glittered before him, have often enough been Utopian; but, on the other hand, he has realised very much which ignorance would have looked upon as mere folly, and there may be in store for him greater conquests than the most sanguine have ever anticipated. The results of real science transcend the dreams of imagination.

* Essay concerning Human Understanding, Book 3, chap. ix.

† Essay concerning Human Understanding, Book 3, chap. xi.

‡ Epilogue by Owen Meredith.

Mr. L. And is moral evil one of the things that will be diminished by the material and mental progress predicted for mankind?

Mr. T. A certain amount of moral evil is the product of ignorance, and may be expected to disappear as knowledge increases.

Mr. L. We were speaking yesterday of Mr. Lecky's book on European Morals, which you were reading—how do you like it?

Mr. T. Very much, but I have been puzzled with the first chapter, in which he discusses the Utilitarian Theory of Morals.

Mr. L. His treatment of the subject is not to me at all satisfactory.

Mr. T. I wish we could read a few passages together.

Mr. L. If you will bring the book into the lower arbour we will do so; we shall probably not be interrupted there, and if you have nothing else to do, it will be a good morning's work.

Mr. T. Or unless the white dress I see fluttering yonder should raise thoughts of Tennyson, and attract you to something more fascinating, for I thought I heard you promise Miss Hope to read Tennyson's "Love and Duty" to her this morning.

Mr. L. And you probably think that a duty one loves is not likely to be neglected; the fact is, however, that the duty stands over until to-morrow, for they are all going to Ilkwood to-day, and neither the white dress nor its wearer will interrupt our discussion.

Mr. T. Well, then, I will fetch Lecky's first volume, and your commonplace book, which may throw some light on the subject. (*Mr. Tudor returns with Lecky's "History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne."*) To start from Mr. Lecky's plainest and most unquestionable proposition will enable us to get at his meaning. He says, "Some qualities, such as benevolence, chastity, or veracity, are better than others, and

that we ought to cultivate them and repress their opposites.”

Mr. L. One can have no difficulty in agreeing with this statement, but then one wants to know why these qualities are better than others; what is it that makes them better, and gives to them their superiority? This is the essence of the controversy; they are better, as I believe, for the definite reason that their results are more beneficial to mankind. Experience has proved that they conduce to the happiness and advancement of the race, and this it is which entitles them to the name of good. Mr. Lecky says that “right carries with it a feeling of obligation;” which is true when the word has got a recognised place in human affairs. The domain of obligation grows from generation to generation, as the knowledge of right is ascertained and enlarged.

Mr. T. (reads). “By the constitution of our nature the notion of right carries with it a feeling of obligation. To say a course of conduct is our duty, is in itself and apart from all consequences an intelligible and sufficient reason for practising it, and we derive the first principles of our duties from intuition.”

Mr. L. If Mr. Lecky had said that this was an analysis of his own consciousness, it might have been unobjectionable, but we are dealing with a historical inquiry that is very much confused by the introduction at every turn of the personal pronoun—we. At a certain stage of moral progress, when defined notions of duty, and obligation, and right, have been acquired, and when men understand the consequences of actions, it is easy to assert that they should pursue duty and right “apart from all consequences,” for the word duty implies the existence and knowledge of relations which make a particular course of conduct *due* and desirable. But this is not the question; the notions of duty and right flow from the antecedent facts and information, but previous to this state of things, —before this light was struck out—we ask how men knew

actions to be right and wrong? The question is not to be decided by abstract arguments, without reference to facts.

Mr. T. (reads). “It is easy to understand that experience may show that certain actions are conducive to the happiness of mankind, and that those actions may be regarded as supremely excellent. The question still remains, why are we bound to perform them?”

Mr. L. Actions that conduce to the happiness of mankind will get performed because mankind have an interest in their performance, just as plants which are useful to mankind will be grown because of their utility. Why does a man do any act that is agreeable to him? or, to put the question in Mr. Lecky’s way, why is he bound to perform such acts? His nature or constitution leads or obliges him to do what, according to his knowledge, conduces to his happiness. If a man be under the influence of motives that induce certain acts, he is, in the literal sense of the word, obliged or bound; the motives coerce him; and if law obliges, the law in its turn was made obligatory by circumstances. If you ask why a man is bound to perform acts beneficial to society, I answer, first, because society can compel the performance of them; and next, because man is amenable to the constitution of things by which one set of actions is preferable to another, and preferable is what is preferred for its consequences; the consequences being results both personal and public, not accidental and fortuitous, but the real effects of definite and ascertainable causes. Acts that have only personal consequences a man does or refrains from at his peril. He is bound by his nature and constitution to care for himself, and if he refuses to do so he is hurt. If actions were indifferent, and produced no consequences, they might be disregarded, but not so if they involve pain and peril. Butler says—“If the natural course of things be the appointment of God, and our natural faculties of knowledge and experience are given us by him, then the good and bad consequences that

follow our actions are his appointment, and our foresight of these consequences is a warning by him how we ought to act.”* We *must* do or bear what our nature and constitution appoint—to *this* we are “bound,”—we submit or resist at our peril; what pleases us we “perform” for its pleasantness; what is painful we avoid for its painfulness; and to say we are “bound” or obliged adds no force to the language.

Mr. T. You would say we are “bound to perform” certain actions—such, for example, as eating and drinking—by the condition of things, and are bound to perform others by the compulsion of law; but in the ultimate analysis we are “bound” by the desire to escape what is disagreeable or to obtain what is agreeable.

Mr. L. This is certainly the real bond, both as regards the individual and society. The word disagreeable expresses perhaps too slight a feeling of aversion, and yet it seems correct, for it is the want of agreement between two things that is at the bottom of the question; but the disagreement must be real and radical, not merely imaginary or conventional.

Mr. T. To Mr. Lecky’s question—Why we are bound? you would answer that the constitution of things binds us. We may create false obligations, in our ignorance, but obligation itself is the force by which circumstances rule our feeling and intelligence.

Mr. L. The idea of obligation undoubtedly springs from the fact of being obliged, and “being obliged” means “must,” and “must” means the pressure and compulsion of things. Society says you must do certain things; your constitution says you must not do certain other things; and when we probe it to the bottom, it is because these several things are hurtful, or otherwise, that we are to do or avoid them. Being “bound” also implies the action of two or more persons related to one

* Analogy, Part I. chap. ii.

another, and that to which they are "bound" is the fulfilment of the relations subsisting between them—the relations being a series of facts which may be perverted in a thousand ways.

Mr. T. (reads). "A theory of morals must explain not only what constitutes duty, but also how we obtain the notion of there being such a thing as duty. It must tell us not merely what is the course of conduct we ought to pursue; but also what is the meaning of the word ought, and from what source we derive the idea it expresses."

Mr. L. Mr. Lecky finds a word existing in a complicated and highly organised state of society, and expressing deep and varied meaning; and he appears to assume that what the word represents now, it represented in the beginning—which is an error. The Archbishop of York, in his work, "An Outline of the Necessary Laws of Thought," says on this subject, "It does not follow that a word, as we use it now, bears a gross, narrow, or material sense, because the root to which we can refer it was connected with matter. . . . If spirit meant originally no more than breath, it has so far left that sense behind, that when the breath is exhaled the spirit remains immortal." It would be absurd to argue because the word "spirit" may now have acquired a meaning beyond its original signification, that it always possessed it; and it is not less absurd to assume that the word "ought," with the varied associations created for it by generations of writers and thinkers, was primarily endowed with the entire meaning which has become its later inheritance. "The value of the high-sounding name Patrician, in the later Republic, must not be transferred to the original Fathers of Rome."* In its primitive form, with which only we are concerned, the word "ought" is of no doubtful or recondite meaning; it is a part of the word owe; and the fact of owing must have existed

* Long's Decline of the Roman Republic.

before the form "ought" came into being. Chapman, in his comedy of "All Fools" (1605) says—

"My father yet hath ought Dame Nature debt
These threescore years and ten."

The idea now represented by the word grew out of the facts, and whatever aristocratic connections it may since have formed, here is its ancestry; and the word "duty" belongs to the same family. "Render unto all their dues" (Rom. xiii. 7) is the concrete from which the abstract "duty" has been derived; and the whole set of words, "ought," "must," "debt," "duty," "bound," etc., as they appear in our English Bible, are the representatives of one and the same Greek word, signifying "to owe:" this is the root from which they have sprung, and the sap of it runs through them all. That they should have had so humble an origin may seem improbable—as to the unlettered man listening to the music of the Homeric verses,—

"Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn,"

it might be inconceivable that such glorious sounds could be woven out of the few insignificant scratches that make up an alphabet.

Mr. T. Mr. Lecky puts it, that, according to Utilitarianism, "no character, feeling, or action is naturally better than others, and, as long as men are in a savage condition, morality has no existence."

Mr. L. What does Mr. Lecky mean when he says morality has no existence? Does he mean Christian morality. But translate the word morality into moral actions, and I say that wherever men have learned to discriminate between voluntary actions that in their nature are hurtful or beneficial, they have got a rudimentary notion of what is moral; and, far from contending that "no character, feeling, or action is naturally better than others," I should affirm there is the greatest difference between one set of actions and another; and that the

difference consists in the one being hurtful and the other beneficial—a distinction broad and plain, and of all others the easiest to discover; and, if it be sometimes difficult to apply, it is a test than which none else can be so safe and certain.

Mr. T. (reads). “The distinctive characteristic of the inductive school of moralists is an absolute denial of the existence of any natural or innate moral sense or faculty enabling us to distinguish between the higher and lower parts of our nature, revealing to us either the existence of a law of duty or the conduct that it prescribes.”

Mr. L. Whoever affirms the existence of an “innate moral sense” must prove it, and account for the present and past condition of mankind upon this hypothesis. Cruel and brutal acts have been everywhere sanctioned and approved. The innate moral sense has had no better standard than that worked out by experience or enjoined by authority. There was no law to condemn notions of right and wrong, which experience has unequivocally found to be evil. What Mr. Lecky calls the higher and lower parts of our nature have been rated differently in nearly every age, and by nearly every people; higher and lower are relative terms that merge into one another, but an innate moral sense, set in motion for the purpose, ought surely to give uniform decisions.

Mr. T. (reads). “The differences between the intuitive moralists and their rivals . . . are of two kinds. Both acknowledge the existence in human nature of both benevolent and malevolent feelings, and that we have a natural power of distinguishing one from the other; but the first maintain, and the second deny, that we have any natural power of perceiving that one is better than the other.”

Mr. L. The word natural is ambiguous; but let that pass. This statement, however, contradicts in some degree what Mr. Lecky last said. He now says both schools admit a natural power of distinguishing, but the inductive schools

deny that we have a natural power of perceiving that one is better than the other. I do not dispute that men have a natural ability, or power, or whatever you like to call it, which discriminates between actions; but I contend that the discrimination is based upon the fact that the actions in one case are beneficial, and in another injurious, and that, for this reason, they are ultimately designated right or wrong. Men find that single acts are injurious or otherwise, and experience enlarges their horizon; and thus they tolerate in one age what is intolerable in another, but the ground of the classification is primarily the consequences of the acts. A false standard may prevail; and those who make laws may brand actions as unlawful which interfere with their rights or dignity, and opinion, ill-informed or interested, may support them, and a public conscience be created to which private ones conform. It might be said that the Supreme Ruler of the world has so constituted things that "to do justly and to love mercy" is beneficial to every one, that right actions are always in their consequences good, and that they are right because they are good.

Mr. T. (reads). "When moralists assert that what we call virtue derives its reputation solely from its utility, and that the interest of the agent is the one motive to practise it, our first question is, naturally, how far this theory agrees with the feelings and the language of mankind. But if tested by this criterion, there never was a doctrine more emphatically condemned than utilitarianism. In all its stages and in all its assertions it is in direct opposition to common language and to common sentiment. In all nations and in all ages the ideas of interest and utility on the one hand, and virtue on the other, have been regarded by the multitude as perfectly distinct, and all languages recognise the distinction."

Mr. L. Now, first of all, the common language of mankind is not a standard to which such a question can be referred. Language conforms more or less accu-

rately to the superficial appearance of things, and bears upon it the impress of many errors, into which mankind have fallen. I don't pretend to know what is found in "all languages," "all ages," "all nations," and the many other "alls" that are so confidently introduced. Language represents the sun as setting, and conveys the impression that the earth is stationary and the sun moving; the common language of mankind contains many other such like errors, and cannot be appealed to as evidence of a scientific fact, which has its own method of proof; the language of mankind can but express the notions which men have arrived at upon all sorts of subjects; and as their notions require revision, the language in which they have been clothed has no higher or better warrant than the things or ideas of which it was the vehicle, and needs to be modified with them. "What we call virtue," says Mr. Lecky;—now who is we? Pick out the best men from "all nations and all ages," and let them make a list of the separate actions which were called virtuous and the reverse in their time, and would two of them be found to agree?

Mr. T. (reads). "If the excellence of virtue consists solely in its utility, or tendency to promote the happiness of men, a machine, a fertile field, or a navigable river, would all possess in a very high degree the element of virtue. If we restrict the term to human actions which are useful to society, we should still be compelled to canonise a crowd of acts which are utterly remote from all our ordinary notions of morality."

Mr. L. I confess that, upon a scientific question, remoteness from "ordinary notions" would not concern me; nothing could be more remote from the ordinary notions of men at one time than the generalisations of political economy. I say that virtuous actions promote the happiness of man. If it be said that a fertile field, a machine, or a river does this, I grant it. I don't assert that nothing promotes the happiness of mankind but virtuous actions. The happiness of man flows from

various sources, but the most durable and certain flows from his actions. Is this true or not? because fertile fields are useful, must we assert that virtuous actions are not so? we don't say that all actions useful to society are virtuous, but that it is the characteristic of virtuous actions to be useful to society; and they are distinguished from all the other things Mr. Lecky names, as proceeding from the dispositions and intentions of voluntary agents.

Mr. T. (reads). "No intuitive moralist ever dreamed of doubting that benevolence or charity—or, in other words, the promotion of the happiness of man—is a duty. He maintains that it not only is so, but that we arrive at this fact by direct intuition, and not by the discovery that such a course is conducive to our interest."

Mr. L. This is not a fair statement of the case. At what stage of man's progress does he arrive at the idea that it is his duty to promote the happiness of man? Show us the nation that possessed this "direct intuition," and which did not begin by the pursuit of individual interest. Again, to promote the happiness of man can hardly be called a specific duty. To perform acts which promote his happiness is a duty, but as to what those acts are men have only very partially agreed; men have thought they were promoting the happiness of mankind by doing the most outrageous acts of cruelty. A "direct intuition" that left them ignorant of the consequences of acts would be of little service to them.

Mr. T. (reads). "Happiness is one of the most indeterminate and undefinable words in the language, and what are the conditions 'of the greatest possible happiness' no one can precisely say. No two nations, and perhaps no two individuals, would find them the same; and even if every virtuous act were incontestably useful, it by no means follows that its virtue is derived from its utility." (Page 40.)

Mr. L. Granted that it is not easy to enumerate all the various ingredients that go to make up the complex

total called happiness, yet it is not difficult to discover what actions are hurtful to us and what are agreeable, and thus to find the road towards happiness. But is the word happiness less definite and constant in its meaning than the words Mr. Lecky employs so positively? Actions do unmistakably differ in their results, and do influence man's happiness, and what higher recommendation can an action possess than that it promotes the happiness of rational agents? I don't speak of results that are imaginary, but real—not apparent consequences but actual ones. I don't reckon abnormal conditions, nor should conclusions on such a subject be invalidated by idiosyncrasies or aberrations from a sound state of nerves and sensibilities. If a man inherits a temper and constitution that is diseased and depraved, or a taste that has been corrupted and debased, we are no more to alter our general conclusions on his account than we are to deny the nutritive properties of bread, because in certain states of the system it is not a wholesome diet.

Mr. T. (reads). “On the great theatre of public life, especially in periods of great convulsions, when passions are fiercely roused, it is neither the man of delicate scrupulosity and sincere impartiality, nor yet the single-minded religious enthusiast, incapable of dissimulation or procrastination, who confers most benefit upon the world. It is much rather the astute statesman, earnest about his ends, but unscrupulous about his means, equally free from the trammels of conscience and the blindness of zeal, who governs because he partly yields to the passions and prejudices of his time.”

Mr. L. The language here is peculiar. “Zeal” afflicted with “blindness,” and a “conscience” in “trammels,” are not statesman-like things at any period, and a statesman who “partly yields to the passions and prejudices of his time” is most likely in part under their dominion; but surely the “sincere, scrupulous, single-minded enthusiast” is not the ideal of humanity, for he may join to these

qualities a perversity of intellect, an infirmity of temper, or a narrowness of vision, which may mar every good disposition he possesses; whilst the statesman—reversing the picture—acting wisely in his vocation, adapting his means to his ends, though with an ulterior aim to his own aggrandisement, succeeds in doing the good he works for. The abolition of the corn laws was a measure highly advantageous to the nation, and it would have been so if those who brought it about were actuated by a predominant desire to enrich themselves; and, on the contrary, many of our penal laws were unmixedly abominable, however sincere and single-minded the enthusiasts might be who enacted them. We are not now considering the merit of the agent, but the consequences of his actions. If a man intends well—of which we can only conjecture—and does ill—of which we are able to judge—his actions are bad in spite of his intentions. If another does well, of design, but with some personal qualities that are not good, his actions are not to be condemned for his individual frailty. Both agents may be faulty, but the actions of the one are admittedly better than those of the other. To abolish the corn laws from a mercenary motive was better than to enact barbarous and cruel penal laws with the most excellent intentions.

Mr. T. (reads). “Let us suppose an inquirer who intended to regulate his life consistently by the utilitarian principle. . . . One of his first observations will be that, in very many special cases, acts—such as murder, theft, and falsehood—which the world calls criminal, and which in the majority of instances would undoubtedly be hurtful, appear eminently productive of good. Why, then, he may ask, should they not in these cases be performed?” (Page 43.)

Mr. L. One would certainly like to see the inquirer Mr. Lecky postulates, and ask him a few questions, that one might know what sort of good “murder, theft, and falsehood” “appear eminently productive of.” Men have

committed these crimes, but the "good" they were in search of was mostly the gratification of some bad passion. If, however, any man in modern life, and not in a mad-house, should come to think that murder, theft, and falsehood were eminently productive of good, he would in all probability be put under restraint. And if he should unfortunately act upon his queer notion of things, he would most likely get hanged; for the world has a very clear opinion upon this subject, and will not allow it to be tampered with. But assuming Mr. Lecky's inquirer to have a real existence, one might tell him that if murder, theft, and falsehood *did* ever appear to him eminently productive of good, the appearance was a delusion and a snare, like many more; that the world is governed, as far as possible, by facts, and not by appearances; and that, as a matter of fact, it had been proved in the most unequivocal manner that these crimes are injurious, and that society properly puts forth all its energy to stamp them out. He might also be told that the question is not a new one, but has been settled long ago; that the first man who made the experiment of murder not only found no good in it, but confessed that it brought "punishment greater than he could bear" (Genesis iv. 13). If, notwithstanding such lessons, Mr. Lecky's inquirer persevered in preferring appearances to realities, he must meet the consequences of his actions, which are those parts of them not to be evaded by simulation or sophistry.

Mr. T. And one fails to see how an innate moral sense would mend the matter, or answer so eccentric an inquirer. Why should he abandon what appears eminently good, because the innate moral sense of another man condemns it? The penal consequences of an act, which are part of the constitution of things, may reasonably operate as a deterrent; but what rightful power has the innate moral sense of A to overrule that of B?

Mr. L. If it has such a right, it must be grounded upon some reason; and why, as you ask, is a man to

abstain from what is eminently good at the bidding of another? If Mr. Lecky says it is not good, there is an end of his objection. He started the hypothesis that the thing seemed good—to a villain perhaps it might; but men's acts in the region of morals have distinct consequences that make them good or evil—

“Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not ‘seems.’”*

Mr. T. And as the crimes Mr. Lecky enumerates destroy happiness and create distrust and hatred, men denounce and punish them as evil.

“Blood hath been shed ere now, i' th' olden time,
Ere human statute purged the gentle weal.”†

The “human statute” embodies human experience, and arrests the bloodshed of the “olden time” in the interest of the “gentle weal,” regardless of the “intuitions” of fantastical inquirers.

Mr. L. The standard of right has relation to things as known and understood. A man's conception of duty and right is not an abstraction worked out of his own consciousness, but something put into his mind by instruction and experience, which continually modify men's conclusions, and these modified conclusions become the starting point of a new generation, which again transmits to its successors a larger inheritance,—an organisation to which a truer and more trustworthy apprehension of things is possible.

Mr. T. (reads). “That the present disposition of affairs is in many respects unjust, and that suffering often attends a course which deserves reward, and happiness a course which deserves punishment, leads men to infer a future state of retribution. Take away the consciousness of desert, and the inference would no longer be made.”

Mr. L. This argument is, I am aware, a popular one; but how can Mr. Lecky use it? What is meant by desert? “A course which deserves reward” must mean certain

* Hamlet.

† Macbeth.

actions which deserve it, and why do they deserve it? Their proper result is assumed to be happiness. Why, unless it be the common characteristic of right actions? And then, by the bad arrangements of society, by unjust laws, or by the force of adverse circumstances, the doer of right actions is robbed of his reward, and thence men infer a state of retribution. The man has been deprived of what was due to him, and it is concluded that he will be recompensed hereafter; or, on the other hand, by the possession of power and influence he has been able to counterwork the natural consequences of bad actions, and has appeared to escape the pain which was their due; yet it is inferred he has only escaped for a time, and that his wrongdoing will be ultimately avenged. The issue of certain conduct is assumed to be happiness, but the disorder in the world disappoints it; observing which, mankind conclude that the balance will be adjusted in the world to come, and that the real consequences of actions cannot finally be frustrated or defeated. The whole force of the argument lies in the fact that virtue and happiness are believed to be at one; or why should the balance be adjusted? Why should there be a day of reckoning unless actions are expected to work out a certain result—the result of distributing their real consequences? Mr. Lecky asks—“What is the whole history of the intellectual progress of the world but one long struggle of the intellect of man to emancipate itself from the deceptions of nature?” and affirms that “only after ages of toil did the mind of man emancipate itself from those deadly errors to which, by the deceptive appearances of nature, the long infancy of humanity is universally doomed.” Are the laws of conduct less “deceptive” in their “appearance”? If “intellectual progress” has been retarded by “deceptions of nature,” has not moral progress been equally checked? And what are appearances but the superficial and apparent consequences of things and actions which have to be

corrected by experience and reason? If society has been obstructed by deadly errors in matters intellectual, it has not been less so in whatever relates to the conduct of life; as Shakespeare says, man is always

“Most ignorant of what he’s most assured,
His glassy essence.”—*

Mr. T. (reads). “The intuitive moralists . . . maintain that without natural moral perceptions we never should have known that it was our duty to seek the happiness of mankind when it diverged from our own; and they deny that virtue was either originally evolved from, or is necessarily proportioned to, utility.”

Mr. L. To seek the happiness of mankind is a large phrase, and finds no place in primitive codes. But how do the “intuitive moralists,” know that it could not be found out by experience? If it is known now and was once unknown, the presumption is that facts have brought it to light, as they have brought other things to light; but, again, why may not one man’s happiness be an effect of which other men’s happiness is the cause? Is there any intuition on this point? Moral perceptions men have, or they could make no moral distinctions. The question is, Of what do the perceptions inform them? what is the thing perceived? That an act is right? Where does the notion of rightness come from, as applied to an action? and what is its rightness, as distinct from its beneficialness? Men perceive that certain actions are hurtful to them; a rule is then laid down, conformity to which is—right.

Mr. T. But you wouldn’t consider that the conclusions of a few lawmakers, or even of a “tyrant majority,” constitute right?

Mr. L. Certainly not; both may be utterly mistaken. What I mean is, that the notion of right implies conformity to some rule. The rule itself may not be a law

* Measure for Measure.

of life which experience eventually approves, but, being the best attainable at the time, it serves as a standard or measure, and the word right expresses the idea of agreement with it. Hooker says, "Goodness in actions is like unto straightness; wherefore, that which is done well we term *right*."* Straightness is ascertained by comparison with some objective standard, and rightness by the same method.

Mr. T. (reads). "Justice, humanity, veracity, and kindred virtues, not merely have the power of attracting us—we have also an intellectual perception that they are essentially and immutably good; that their nature does not depend upon, and is not relative to, our constitutions; that it is impossible and inconceivable that they should ever be vices, and their opposites virtues. They are, therefore, it is said, intuitions of the reason."

Mr. L. These are large words—"essentially and immutably good"—"not relative to our constitutions," though how we are to become acquainted with what is not relative to our constitutions Mr. Lecky does not inform us. No one dreams that at the same time and place, to the same persons, the words virtue and vice meant the same things; but it is equally clear that at different times these and similar words have been applied to dissimilar actions. The abstract word—justice, has conveyed to men's minds opposite ideas. Acts have been thought just, and by a generalisation from such acts the notion of justice has been formed: but apart from the acts, the notion is a myth. The acts first existed, their qualities were observed, and the word justice expressed that which they were thought to have in common. As men's relations towards each other came to be more correctly appreciated, their notion of justice changed: the acts of one age to which the word has been applied are repugnant to those of another.

* Ecclesiastical Polity, Book I. ch. 8.

There has been a duplicity in the thing represented by the word ; the constituents of the notion have not been the same. A man had a notion of justice—the identical word that Mr. Lecky uses—and he had in his mind also the remembrance of acts of real cruelty, oppression, and selfishness, and he saw nothing in these acts inconsistent with his notion of justice—he was conscious of no antagonism between them. To argue as if there were somewhere a concrete thing called justice—like a footrule—is an illusion. A footrule that was six inches long at one time and twelve at another, would create inextricable confusion, its length being altered and not its name ; and exactly such a footrule is the word justice, as used by Mr. Lecky. The word has a meaning in relation to human conduct ; and as men's estimate of human conduct has varied, the rule by which they have measured it has varied also. The word, if it so pleases any one, may be called immutable ; the thing signified by the word has been mutable enough.

Mr. T. In any intelligible sense justice must mean the regulation of human affairs according to some standard which shall correctly estimate the rights and interests of the individual and the community—rights and interests which are the ultimate facts of man's nature. Provide for these in their order and proportion, and you will do justice. If by justice Mr. Lecky means this, he may say it is immutably good.

Mr. L. That such a rule of action is good cannot be denied, but it is one related entirely to man and his affairs, whereas Mr. Lecky asserts that justice is not relative to our constitution, and is an intuition of the reason ; but your description of it involves an acquaintance with actions and their consequences—not only a disposition to deal equally, but a knowledge of what constitutes equality. Look at the ethical notions of some leading men of the past. When the Israelites were threatened

with a great calamity, Moses is reported to have said, "Shall one man sin, and wilt Thou be wroth with all the congregation?" (Num. xvi. 22)—as much as to say such a rule of action would be unjust; and yet to others it has not seemed so. Again, the Israelites, reading erroneously the signs of things, had framed this proverb—"The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezek. xviii. 2); but they were reprov'd for entertaining the notion. Such a method of dealing was affirmed to be "not equal," although it had probably many advocates, and some apparent sanctions. Then, again, justice has been satisfied to allow one set of human beings to have unlimited power over another, and then she has pronounced this arrangement to be utterly bad for both parties. In all these cases, and they might be multiplied indefinitely, there has been no uniform and abiding notion of what constituted justice.

Mr. T. One may say that, the circumstances of society being different, the methods of dealing would vary also; a rude people would bear rude methods, and so on. But the passages you quote from the Bible involve large general principles, and if men disagree upon these they cannot have within them any common and primitive notion relating to them which could properly be called an intuition of the reason. The remonstrance of Moses which you have quoted, is it formed upon principles of justice or is it not? Until we know all that is involved in the circumstances, our conceptions must be inadequate. One can imagine a set of circumstances that would lead us to approve the principle indicated in the question; and, again, we can imagine another set from which we should unhesitatingly conclude that it was a profoundly unjust principle. The word equality, made use of by Ezekiel, expresses the clearest and plainest notion of what satisfies the mind; but then, what is equality when principles are unfixed, where knowledge is partial, and

the instruments both of judgment and action are imperfect? Mr. Lecky says, "No one ever contended that justice was a vice or injustice a virtue." (Page 80.)

Mr. L. Nevertheless, it has often been contended that unjust actions were virtuous, and just ones vicious. "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" was in "old time" reckoned to be a rule of justice: it would now be regarded as the opposite. The justice, therefore, which exacted it at one era is named cruelty, and at another a legal and legitimate retaliation. We have to deal with concrete actions—an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth—does it engender cruel and revengeful feelings or not? if it does it is evil. A bad thing may be made use of to drive out a worse, and harsh methods may be needed to uproot confirmed brutishness; but then we are not to confound good and bad, nor to disguise under a good abstract name a thing that is evil.

Mr. T. Military law and strait-waistcoats are defensible things against anarchy and madness; but whether the justice they distribute is to be called vice or virtue will depend upon circumstances.

Mr. L. In former times men and women who did not believe what the Church required were subjected to grievous penalties, and so badly were they thought of that the word which expressed misbelief was applied to the vilest characters, and a *miscreant*—though his creed might be unimpeachable—was a name for the lowest wretch; and men of the calmest minds discovered no injustice in burning alive a person whose belief in certain points diverged from their own. The men of this order had notions of "justice," and feelings of "humanity"—so called, and yet, without any provocation, and with perfect equanimity, they did diabolical deeds. By-and-by it was recognised that belief was a state of mind, the product of evidence and association, and that where neither the proper evidence nor the fitting associations had been brought to bear upon the mind, the product was not to be looked for; and

then it was felt there was some force in St. Paul's question, "How *can* they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" and in the corollary, How can they believe what is to them, from any cause, incredible? And so it became clear that to burn a living man on account of his belief was not just. Nay, it became conceivable that the men who did the burning were, by reason of it, the greater criminals; inasmuch as it was more plainly and patently wicked thus to burn a fellow-creature, than it was to misbelieve transubstantiation or the creed of St. Athanasius.

Mr. T. To burn a man to death because he thought the evidence for certain propositions insufficient was—though the world applauded—a mockery of justice.

Mr. L. And the world now thinks so, though the burning disposition may survive. Another old notion of justice is thus dissected by Robert Browning:—

“ They were wont to tease the truth
 Out of loath witness (toying, trifling time)
 By torture : 'twas a trick, a vice of the age,
 Here, there, and everywhere, what would you have ?
 Religion used to tell Humanity
 She gave him warrant or denied him course,
 And since the course was much to his own mind,
 Of pinching flesh, and pulling bone from bone,
 To unhusk truth a-hiding in its hulls,
 Nor whisper of a warning stopped the way.
 He, in their joint behalf, the burly slave,
 Bestirred him, mauled and maimed all recusants,
 While, prim in place, Religion overlooked ;
 And so had done till doomsday, never a sign
 Nor sound of interference from her mouth,
 But that at last the burly slave wiped brow,
 Let eye give notice as if soul were there,
 Muttered, ‘ ’Tis a vile trick, foolish more than vile,
 Should have been counted sin ; I make it so :
 At any rate no more of it for me—
 Nay, for I break the torture engine thus !’
 Then did Religion start up, stare amain,
 Look round for help and see none, smile and say,
 ‘ What, broken is the rack ? Well done of thee !’

Did I forget to abrogate its use ?
 Be the mistake in common with us both !
 One more fault our blind age shall answer for,
 Down in my book denounced though it must be
 Somewhere. Henceforth find truth by milder means !'
 Ah, but, Religion, did we wait for thee
 To ope the book, that serves to sit upon,
 And pick such place out, we should wait indeed !
 That is all history : and what is not now,
 Was then, defendants found it to their cost." *

Mr. T. Thus complacently did justice torture and burn, and see in it neither evil nor incongruity. To imagine, as Mr. Lecky puts it, that in this world there is somewhere a concrete thing or conception which is immutable, whose name is justice, is an illusion. Actions called just have been largely leavened with qualities that were unjust, and the abstract notion in men's minds participated in the defectiveness.

Mr. L. The word has played a great part in human affairs, but the smallest amount of information that can be given about it is contained in Mr. Lecky's propositions—that it is an "intuition of the reason," and "is not relative to our constitutions." Rather, does it signify such a mode of dealing with the world's business as approves itself to the world's consciousness ; but the world's consciousness is a fluctuating element. At all times it recognises a better and a worse, a justice and injustice ; but the better of one era is the worse of another, and the justice of this period the injustice of that.

Mr. T. Intuitions, however, should be fixed, and are not things to be mended ; and knowledge that is original and primitive is not to be corrected by what is secondary and derived. There is another question—the words in what Browning calls Religion's book have been much the same at all times, but they have stood for very different sets of ideas ; how is this to be explained ?

* The Ring and the Book.

Mr. L. Torture must be denounced somewhere in her book, Religion says, but she didn't find it out. The words were there, but not the meaning. Isn't it Carlyle who says, we see only what we bring eyes to see?

Mr. T. (reads). "There are many cases in which diversities of moral judgment arise from causes that are not moral but purely intellectual, as in the case of usury, which obviously arose from a false notion of the uses of money."

Mr. L. So it may be said now, but such cases once involved moral delinquency; they were not reckoned intellectual errors by those whose conscience they offended. The reference to usury as one of this class of errors is especially unfortunate. In the first place, the Israelites were permitted to take usury of strangers (Deut. xxiii. 20), but so profound a moral feeling had been created on the subject that Ezekiel enumerates amongst the men who are "just," and shall "live," him "who hath not given forth upon usury," and abstinence from this offence he classes with abstinence from adultery, robbery, and oppression of every kind (Ezek. xviii. 8); and a devotional writer in the 15th Psalm, asking—"Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" replies—he "that putteth not out his money to usury;" so that here is an action having in it, as Mr. Lecky admits, no moral quality, which had come to be regarded with the deepest moral disapprobation. I don't care to follow Mr. Lecky into his argument on the subject of abortion, but one may well ask, What is the value of an innate moral sense which mistakes usury for a crime, and is doubtful as to the moral character of abortion? Mr. Lecky separates "moral judgment" and "moral feeling," and there is a difference, but not such a one as he points to. Moral feeling gradually but certainly follows moral judgment. Convince the judgment that an action is hurtful, and a moral feeling may be excited to condemn it. Associate the idea of sin with the practice of usury,

and abstinence from it is immediately rewarded with moral approbation; and if usury were, in fact, as pernicious as stealing, it would deserve similar condemnation. Men were mistaken about it, but their innate moral sense did not help to relieve them of the error. It was political economy that banished this form of evil-doing from the province of morals, and destroyed a superstition so widespread and venerable.

Mr. T. (reads). "The iniquity of theft, murder, falsehood, or adultery, rests upon grounds generically distinct from those on which men pronounce it to be sinful to eat meat on Friday, or to work on Sunday, or to abstain from religious assemblies. The reproaches conscience directs against those who are guilty of these last acts are purely hypothetical; conscience enjoining obedience to the Divine commands, but leaving it to reason to determine what those commands may be."

Mr. L. The answer to such a statement is furnished by a historical example. In the 15th chapter of Numbers it is recorded that an Israelite was found gathering sticks on the Sabbath day, and for this offence he was put to death; and it is hard to believe that the persons who inflicted the punishment regarded the offence as "generically distinct" from theft or murder; and it is the judgment of people upon actions of their own time that must determine what their moral standard was. How is a man to know the generic difference between commands, when they are presented to him with the same sanctions? The punishment of two crimes being equal, what is the generic distinction between them if it be not the amount of hurtfulness which each of them is calculated to produce? Then the "reason" of mankind can do little to determine what are Divine commands; it takes them mainly on authority; and conscience "reproaches" men for breaches of commands said to be Divine which were never entitled to such distinction. Assuming, however, two Divine commands, the one not to kill and the other not to work

on the Sabbath-day, why should the breach of one produce reproaches of conscience merely hypothetical or generically distinct from the other? The argument of St. Paul, in the 14th chapter of Romans, proves that the breach of ceremonial and "hypothetical" commands burdened the mind and kindled remorse as grievously as the infraction of real obligations "generically distinct."

Mr. T. (reads). "What transubstantiation is in the order of reason, the Augustinian doctrine of the damnation of unbaptized infants and the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation are in the order of morals. Of these doctrines it is not too much to say that in the form in which they have often been stated they surpass in atrocity any tenets that have ever been admitted into any Pagan creed, and would, if they formed an essential part of Christianity, amply justify the term 'pernicious heresy,' which Tacitus applied to the faith. That an all-righteous and all-merciful Creator, in the full exercise of those attributes, deliberately calls into existence sentient beings whom He has from eternity irrevocably destined to endless, unspeakable, unmitigated torture, are propositions which are so extravagantly absurd, and so ineffably atrocious, that their adoption might well lead men to doubt the universality of moral perceptions."

Mr. L. The propositions here so energetically condemned have been believed explicitly or implicitly by many men. Why they have so believed is for our purpose immaterial; if, in morals, authority or argument can generate belief that is "extravagantly absurd," or approbation of what is "ineffably atrocious," then innate moral perceptions must be a poor protection against error; if a moral sense cannot set down and settle the elementary notions of what is good, or save man from approving what is "ineffably atrocious," its verdict must be of little worth; if it can mistake moral ugliness for moral beauty, or "palter with us in a double sense," how can we rely on it? Mr. Lecky and many more, denounce as "ineffably

atrocious" what Augustinians pronounce to be divine and true; and yet both parties are said to possess a moral sense, the precise and proper object of which is to discriminate moral qualities. If the Creator of the world be "such an one" as Augustinianism depicts, Mr. Lecky would regard it as the chaos of morals; but the two beliefs do co-exist, and render his theory inexplicable.

Mr. T. Augustinianism involves problems stretching beyond the range of human knowledge, and if the whole of it were known it might not deserve Mr. Lecky's denunciations.

Mr. L. But he and others believe that it does, which is enough. The beliefs in question are fundamental and irreconcilable—positive and negative poles; if the one is good the other is evil, and the moral sense is totally incompetent to adjudicate between them. We are not discussing Augustinianism; it may be what Mr. Lecky asserts, or it may not. We are considering the state of mind that calls it good, and the other state of mind that calls it evil; and we ask which state of mind conforms to the rule denominated right, and what, in this special case, by Mr. Lecky's standard, the rule definitely is. That which is "extravagantly absurd" contradicts some clear intuition or some plain deduction from it, and that which is "ineffably atrocious" is something radically cruel; and it is manifestly absurd that what is thus cruel can be either good or right. "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John xvi. 2). Such a notion of the Divine Being we know to be false; we know He is not served by cruel acts: and we deny the validity of any thinking that justifies evil deeds by supermundane considerations. Whatever may be the fate of Augustinianism, and whatever the possibilities beyond and above it, we refuse any approbation or any of the rightful authority of this world to principles or practices that are hostile to man.

Mr. T. (reads). "The insensibility of some savages

to the criminality of theft arises from the fact that they are accustomed to have all things in common."

Mr. L. Were it possible to have all things in common there would be no theft; the air cannot be stolen, and if all things were in the same abundance, and there was no need of appropriation, the law of theft would not exist. There are many things now beyond its operation; and it is easy to imagine an economy where there would be no criminality in theft—where, in fact, there would be no such thing. The effort and self-control necessary to restrain man, in the midst of an abundance that is appropriated, from taking or even coveting what is not his own, may be a needful process of moral culture. In fact, all self-restraint is a machinery for working out moral results which elevate the character of man. He has acquired slowly crude notions of right and wrong, and was placed in circumstances that, by an irresistible influence, tended to develop and rectify them. He has had no ready-made standard by which to gauge his relations, but he soon discovered what hurt or helped him. His first generalisations were imperfect enough, but they grow better and truer—

"Till old experience doth attain
To something of prophetic strain." *

Mr. T. (reads). "The considerations I have urged with reference to humanity apply with equal force to the various relations of the sexes. . . . The feeling of all men and the language of all nations, the sentiment which, though often weakened, is never wholly effaced,—that this appetite, even in its most legitimate gratification, is a thing . . . to which a feeling of shame is naturally attached, something that jars with our conception of perfect purity, something we could not with propriety ascribe to a holy being."

Mr. L. Mr. Lecky is constantly led away by a rhetoric

* Milton.

which is no doubt very fascinating, but sadly deficient in probative force; and one must protest against such large words as the "feeling of all men and the language of all nations;" for the assertion is very much wider than any proof that can be adduced in its favour; but I should answer his whole argument by the question of Eliphaz the Temanite—"Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?" (Job iv. 17). The "feeling of shame," said to be so universal, is the very thing one misses in the social ways of primitive men and women; in the comparatively recent history to be found in such a book as the Bible, modern ears are shocked and startled at the things they are sometimes compelled to listen to; and if individuals of the high moral tone delineated there did and detailed such deeds, what "feeling of shame" had their lower and less refined brethren? If they did this thing in the green tree, what would they do in the dry? Mr. Lecky should leave this argument to the ascetics who regard the whole functions of the body as unclean, but whose unnatural system has yielded fruits the most loathsome of all. The relations of the sexes have done more to refine and elevate the human race than any other single cause; and it is mere Manicheism to assert we have an "innate intuitive perception that there is something degrading in *this* sensual part of our nature." It is hardly possible to frame an argument on the subject less in accordance with facts than Mr. Lecky's. What "conception of perfect purity" is entertained by an uncivilised people?—and all people have been uncivilised; what, indeed, is any man's "conception of perfect purity" apart from his own organisation? Is the "delicate Ariel" more pure than the "admired Miranda"?

"Hence, bashful cunning!

And prompt me, plain and holy innocence."*

Mr. T. Mr. Lecky's argument is an anachronism.

* The Tempest.

His Creator has given to man a certain constitution, the working of which, in all its parts, involves nothing that is shameful, and nothing inconsistent with the purity of a being so constituted. "Our conception of perfect purity" may indeed be unlike that formed by beings of a different order. On this subject Bishop Butler writes more wisely than Mr. Lecky. In his sermon "Upon Compassion," he says—"It is an absurdity almost too gross to be mentioned for a man to endeavour to get rid of his senses because the Supreme Being discerns things more perfectly without them. It is as real, though not so obvious an absurdity, to endeavour to eradicate the passions He has given us because He is without them; for, since our passions are as really a part of our constitution as our senses, since the former as really belong to our condition of nature as the latter, to get rid of either is equally a violation of, and breaking in upon, that nature and constitution He has given us. . . . Our appetites, passions, senses, no way imply disease; nor, indeed, do they imply deficiency or imperfection of any sort, but only this, that the constitution of our nature, according to which God has made us, is such as to require them."

Mr. L. What we are in search of is a morality for men and women as we find them in the world, endowed by their Creator with feelings and passions which, in their natural exercise, yield good and wholesome fruit:

"Love's a virtue for heroes; as white as the snow on high hills;
And immortal as every great soul is, that struggles, endures, and
fulfils."*

Mr. T. But you don't altogether identify the passion of love with the sexual feeling Mr. Lecky refers to?

Mr. L. What God has "joined" I am not careful over-curiously to "put asunder."

Mr. T. Mr. Lecky argues that in distant times, and

* Mrs. Browning.

in various parts of the world, higher honours have been paid to virginity than to maternity; and he implies, if he does not absolutely affirm, that this is in accordance with the best and purest impulses of our nature. He speaks of the "ideal wife" of the Romans; "but above all this," he says, approvingly, "we find the traces of a higher ideal," the "vestal virgin."

Mr. L. Roman ideals are not usually attractive; but if this "higher ideal" be "the salt of the earth," surely Mr. Lecky should be able to point out how and where it has produced upon human affairs effects commensurate with its pretensions. Superstition has sanctified forms of folly innumerable. Men and women may remain in single blessedness because matrimony is inconvenient, not because there is a "higher ideal," and they are worthy of honour if (although "*it is not good for them to be alone*") they remain unwedded in order to do some work incompatible with married life; but the superior sanctity of the single state is a decaying superstition. Mr. Tennyson's teaching on this topic is infinitely superior to Mr. Lecky's:

"For, indeed, I know
Of no more subtle master under heaven
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
Not only to keep down the base in man,
But teach high thought, and amiable words,
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
And love of truth, and all that makes a man."

Nature avenges every transgression of her laws, and a recent writer supplies us with a curious commentary on the celibacy of which Mr. Lecky is so enamoured. "The long period of the dark ages under which Europe has lain is due, I believe, in a very considerable degree, to the celibacy enjoined by religious orders on their votaries. Whenever a man or woman was possessed of a gentle nature that fitted him or her to deeds of charity, to meditation, to literature, or to art, the social condition of the

time was such that they had no refuge elsewhere than in the bosom of the Church. But the Church chose to preach and exact celibacy. The consequence was that these gentle natures had no continuance; and thus, by a policy so singularly unwise and suicidal, that I am hardly able to speak of it without impatience, the Church brutalised the breed of our forefathers. She acted precisely as if she had aimed at selecting the rudest portion of the community to be, alone, the parents of future generations. She practised the arts which breeders would use who aimed at creating ferocious, currish, and stupid natures. No wonder that club law prevailed for centuries in Europe; the wonder rather is that enough good remained in the veins of Europeans to enable their race to rise to its present very moderate level of natural morality.*

Mr. T. (reads). "The unchangeable proposition for which we contend is this, that benevolence is always a virtuous disposition—that the sensual part of our nature is always the lower part."

Mr. L. A proposition may be an unchangeable one, whilst the words of which it is made up have embodied a variety of meaning; and an unchangeable proposition, the terms of which are unstable, is a treacherous and deceitful thing. We want to know whether the innate moral perception of the living men and women in primitive times, as they are depicted in history and biography, taught them that particular actions were wrong and hurtful—actions which experience has proved to be unmistakably hurtful to the actor and to society. The Bible tells us that certain evil things were permitted because of the hardness of people's heart. And when was the hardness abolished? Even "the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel" (Proverbs xii. 10). Now it is a

* Hereditary Genius; an Inquiry into its Laws and Consequences, by Francis Galton, F.R.S., etc.

mere juggle of words to speak of actions under abstract names which have no fixed and permanent signification. The chastity of one era would be an intolerable degradation at another, and where actions are different they should not pass under the same name. Mr. Lecky's benevolence, after all, is just what people think to be benevolent, and chastity what they think to be chaste; and his assertion that abstractions are "essentially and immutably good" is devoid of meaning. Immutable things cannot be made known by mutable words. We need not blame the actors of a particular era, but without hesitation we may assert of actions they approved, that in this world of men and women they are essentially bad.

Mr. T. Looking at the matter historically, it must be admitted that cruel and brutal actions mark the early history of all nations. Your quotation from the Proverbs meets the case exactly. The words "tender mercies" may stand for sundry moral acts, and "wicked" for all mankind; and it is affirmed that things called "tender mercies" have been "cruel," so that the names of acts and their qualities have been the precise opposites of each other, and the moral acts of one set of men the immoral acts of another. The words "tender mercies" have been a name for what was cruel, and all such words in the lapse of time seem to have involved like contradictions. What the innate moral sense was doing is hard to say; but when we look below the surface of words, this is what we find.

Mr. L. St. Paul says, "The times of this ignorance God winked at;" but how should man be ignorant of what is known by intuition?

"What a thrice double ass
Was I to take this drunkard for a god,
And worship this dull fool!"

If Caliban's ignorance let him worship such a dull fool as Stephano, is the ignorance greater or less which

worships a piece of wood or stone? and if man has no intuitions that keep him from such blunders, what are the intuitions worth? or is it not a solecism to apply the word intuition to such flagrant misapprehensions? Man's beliefs and his gods have been worthy of one another. The true God is represented as winking at the times of this ignorance—not as approving or justifying them; a distinction Mr. Lecky overlooks.

Mr. T. Is it not objectionable on a question of morals, which should be determined by evidence, to appeal to the Bible, as though it could be settled by authority?

Mr. L. I refer to the Bible as a book of history and ethics, and, whatever other authority it possesses, it is available for this purpose. It contains the history of a simple and primitive people under a theocracy—of a people whose literature embodies a higher moral code than any of their contemporaries; it furnishes evidence of what such a people thought, of the kind of reasoning that was addressed to them, and of the moral atmosphere in which they lived. Their poetry is the expression of their highest devotional feeling; their laws of their highest attainments in moral, social, and political distinctions; and their didactic books of the estimates they formed of life. Now, the least acquaintance with their literature will satisfy us that the considerations addressed to them were always that to do good was to procure good. Mr. Lecky's notion that they should do what was disagreeable, without any prospect of obtaining thereby what was pleasant and pleasurable, is opposed to every page of ethical writing they have left behind them. Their law-giver set before them "blessing and cursing," and told them plainly that they must do good if they would get good. Their literature contains an image in reference to human actions more apt than any Mr. Lecky has adduced. In the second chapter of the first book of Samuel it is said—"The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed." It is by "knowledge" that actions

are estimated, and their consequences are the weights that test them.

Mr. T. (reads). “The universal sentiment of mankind represents self-sacrifice as an essential element of a meritorious act, and means by self-sacrifice the deliberate adoption of the least pleasurable course, without the prospect of any pleasure in return.”

Mr. L. Here, again, Mr. Lecky gets into the universal; and in such cases we generally find that the matter of proof is in inverse ratio to the magnitude of assertion. In the next page he tells us what “all ages, all nations, and all popular judgments, pronounce.” The answer to such sweeping declarations is contained in a few plain and precise words, which prove at any rate that one man, if not two, had a different notion from Mr. Lecky, and disavowed this “universal sentiment of mankind.” St. Paul, or whoever wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, says, “Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.” If these words do not contradict Mr. Lecky’s assertion in the most direct and unequivocal manner, words have no meaning. Moses, —*when he is come to years*—refuses pleasure that is fleeting and instantaneous, and chooses rather what is durable and distant; calculating,—wisely and well. How many disciples would a teacher attract who taught his followers that they must always adopt the least pleasurable course, without the prospect of any pleasure in return? The “universal sentiment of mankind” would be apt to reject the bargain. When Peter found that he and his fellow-disciples had apparently adopted the “least pleasurable course,” he asked, with a frank simplicity, “What shall we have therefor?” and he was told that hereafter “they would sit upon thrones,” etc., and that every one

who followed in their steps should receive an hundred-fold now, in this time, besides a future reward. The question—"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" proves that considerations of personal profit and loss have been reckoned fit instruments to determine men's actions.

Mr. T. (reads). "In exact proportion as we believe a desire for personal enjoyment to be the motive of a good act, is the merit of the agent diminished."

Mr. L. The merit of the agent is not an easy thing to gauge. But what shall we say of the ruler who asked, "Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And then what of the answer, "Thou knowest the commandments," etc.? Assume that the man had asked, How shall I make the present life happy? would the answer have been different? The man desired the "personal enjoyment" of eternal life. He inquired how it was to be secured, and he was referred to the commandments. He was not informed that the desire of eternal life would rob every "good act" of its merit. On the contrary, this desire of personal enjoyment might lead him into the right road, and he might be kept there by the actual enjoyment which his continuance in it gave him. For by the law of habit—which is a law of our nature—that becomes easy and pleasant which at first was hard and burdensome.

"Refrain to-night,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence; the next more easy;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either master the devil, or throw him out
With wondrous potency." *

Mr. T. Mr. Lecky's theory of self-sacrifice is sentimental rather than practical.

Mr. L. And it is expressed in words marked by the usual ambiguity of their class. What is meant by self-

* Hamlet.

sacrifice? The predominant power in a man's habit and constitution may, without impropriety, be named self; and if this be altogether selfish, in the unamiable sense of that word, and takes no account of the wishes and interests of others, it will be wrong, and should be sacrificed; if, on the contrary, it has a due and well-regulated respect to all the claims and feelings of others, it should be cherished and encouraged. Moral, mental, or material considerations may each sway the mind supremely, and constitute the governing power we denominate self; and just as they do so in an inordinate degree, they should be sacrificed; but that which is left will be more satisfying than that which is rejected. If the gratification of sense be the self that needs to be sacrificed, the mental self which takes its place does so by its superior attractiveness, and repays the sacrifice by a more durable and rational reward; and so, if the mental self must be suppressed for a time, in obedience to considerations of a more urgent sort, these again "have their reward" (Matt. vi. 16); and so, in all cases, the "self" that needs to be sacrificed gives place to another that yields a satisfaction more commensurate with the enlarging powers and necessities of a complex and progressive agent like man. It is impossible to deny that the scale of pleasure is thus graduated to men's desires and capacities; and just as you modify these you change the character of the pleasure that is sought, but pleasure of some kind it is. It is a moral arithmetic which has to be learned in the school of experience; but it may be taught so as to render its acquisition easy.

Mr. T. According to such a definition, self-sacrifice might mean the most productive investment of a man's happiness-producing powers.

Mr. L. I don't object to your translation, though it might be put into more acceptable words; and I find in the New Testament a theory of the same sort, though expressed in a somewhat different manner—"If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into

the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire," etc. (Mark ix. 47). Now, dropping the metaphors, what is this but a recommendation to sacrifice the less to the greater? And if, in this case, it is "better" thus to arbitrate between the claims of incompatible possessions, it will be "better" to do so in all cases; and "better" is what produces most happiness. It wouldn't be "better" for the whole body to be cast into hell fire, although this would fulfil Mr. Lecky's condition of adopting "the least pleasurable course, without the prospect of any pleasure in return." It is "better" to sacrifice an inferior self in order to preserve one of greater value; but the converse is never true. The words self-sacrifice, self-denial, and the like, have no more fixed and defined meaning than the word happiness, which Mr. Lecky complains of. Self-denial has meant the austerities of asceticism, and the eccentricities of unreasoning fanaticism; it has canonised Simeon Stylites and George Fox.

" Deep in yon cave Honorius long did dwell,
In hope to merit heaven by making earth a hell." *

Mr. T. But you wouldn't say that virtue and goodness mean the mere balancing of self-interest?

Mr. L. You put the matter unpleasantly, by employing a sort of mercantile phraseology which creates prejudice. Mr. Lecky's proposition is a broad and plain one, and lies at the root of his theory, and cannot sustain itself by translating the opposing argument into the language of the market for the purpose of disfiguring it. The question is one, however, more of things than of words, although giving a bad name to a good thing is apt to endanger its reputation. Let me refer you again to the Bible as representing facts of human nature. Isaiah asks (chap. lv. 2) "Wherefore do ye spend money for that

* Childe Harold.

which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." This is Oriental colouring, but it has little resemblance in form or substance to Mr. Lecky's meagre outline. And if words have any meaning, these surely imply that "righteousness"—right acting—which comprises all moral good that man is capable of, is a means to happiness. It is not described as something added or joined to it afterwards, but as its weft and warp. Man being such as he is—the constitution of nature being such as it is, to be ignorant of or to oppose the order of things produces inevitable pain and loss. Real wrong violates the law of the universe, and the pain that results is evidence of evil. "That which is crooked cannot be made straight" (Eccles. . 15); and that which is hurtful in its nature cannot be made harmless. Call it what you please, if the universe is governed by law, to disregard or defy it is to incur a penalty of some kind.

Mr. T. If we are to gather our evidence from the Bible we must not overlook such statements as the following, in the 37th Psalm:—"I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree."

Mr. L. Certainly not, let us do justice all round; but follow the simile to the end, for the conclusion would probably not be very satisfactory to the grower of green bay trees, as the writer adds, "Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." Now a green bay tree that disappeared in this mysterious and unaccountable manner, like Jonah's gourd, would not be a profitable tree to cultivate; and the temporary prosperousness of wrong-doing does not overturn the theory. The world has many sources of enjoyment, many "ways of pleasantness" which are not "ways of wisdom." The condition of all healthy action is pleasure of some sort, and that of moral action is no exception to the rule.

Mr. T. The argument is to me rather perplexing; and seems akin to the one carried on many thousand years ago, in that far-off land of Uz, by Job and those three friends of his, quaintly called comforters; and if they failed to settle it, I fancy it will not be resolved by us in this nineteenth century of grace, and in this pleasant valley of Arkdale. Job's friends (and the word friend is not the least ambiguous we have met with) argued that he must have perpetrated some great crimes because he suffered so severely, but they were wrong both in fact and theory.

Mr. L. I don't deny that the question is a thorny one, and that it needs the patience of Job to digest all that has been said upon it. Job's friends appear to have erred in assuming that all pain is the punishment of moral wrong-doing. Now, every one of Job's calamities might have happened in the ordinary course of things. The Bedouins of our time plunder just as the Sabeans and Chaldeans plundered Job; and at the meridian of England, the Sabeans and Chaldeans who haunt our Exchanges,—speculators and schemers,—swoop down upon our possessions, and carry them off as ruthlessly as their nomadic predecessors. The lightning too commits ravages now as it did then; the wind still prostrates houses and overthrows the inmates; and "sore boils" continue to afflict mankind; but we have learned in all these cases that the persons suffering such things are not to be reckoned sinners above others (Luke xiii. 2), for it is possible that each one of the ills, by proper precautions, might have been prevented. Despising or neglecting trivial things may produce indefinite evil, and to despise or defy moral conditions may be the most fatal folly of all. But in such a tangled world as this, the consequences of actions are not always to be traced; and yet the rule that governs them is laid down with great precision by that interlocutor in the Book of Job who alone escapes censure. Elihu says, "If they obey and serve him, they

shall spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasures : but if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge." We have no right to assume that these words point to any supernatural consequences ; on the contrary, we may conclude that they describe matters of fact which had come under the speaker's own observation, or had been inculcated upon him by those who had taken note of them ; for if the fact be as he puts it, there is no reason why it should not be observed and recorded.

Mr. T. But then there comes in the consideration of a future life, where it is expected that the inequalities of the present state of things will be redressed. Mr. Lecky adverts to this, and we have spoken of it before.

Mr. L. The language on this subject in the Book of Job is mostly of a gloomy character, and the meaning of words is what they conveyed to those who made use of them. Illuminate them by any light that has subsequently dawned, and they may develop far other meaning than those who used them had any notion of ; and this is an incident of language that creates much illusion. A word is a stationary mark, but the tide of thought rolls higher and higher ; and a careless observer, occupied only with words, assumes that the old mark represents a uniform and constant elevation of the water, than which nothing can be more delusive. Mr. Lecky says that "the present disposition of affairs is in many respects unjust ;" and if we adopt this opinion, what is to prevent our concluding that "the life to come will be of a piece with it?" If, here and now, well-being and well-doing are not bound together in their nature, what security is there that they will be so in a future state ? If the essential characteristic of well-doing is not to promote well-being, why, in the infinite future, should it not be the parent of misery ? and why should the "life to come" be anticipated as a theatre of action, developing more unalloyed happiness as the result of clearer knowledge and purer feeling ? If action

rightly regulated—extraneous causes apart—be not now the condition of happiness, why should it ever be so? The words, “with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James i. 17), express one of the highest ideals of Deity. Butler says, “Suppose the invisible world, and the invisible dispensations of Providence, to be in any sort analogous to what appears; or that both together make up one uniform scheme, the two parts of which—the part which we see and that which is beyond our observation—are analogous to each other.”* But how should this be if the prime characteristic of virtue is not “uniform” here and there? Butler says again, “Virtue to borrow the Christian allusion, is militant here, and various untoward accidents contribute to its being often overborne; but it may combat with greater advantages hereafter, and prevail completely, and enjoy its consequent rewards in some future states.”* Rewards, be it observed, the offspring of its own work, the product of its own powers, not contingent benefits bestowed. Butler goes on to say, “One might add, that suppose all this advantageous tendency of virtue to become effect amongst one or more orders of creatures, in any distant scenes and periods, and to be seen by any orders of vicious creatures throughout the universal kingdom of God;—this happy effect of virtue would have a tendency, by way of example, and possibly in other ways, to amend those of them who are capable of amendment, and being recovered to a just sense of virtue.” Here is another passage on the same subject—“Our finding virtue to be hindered from procuring to itself such superiority and advantages is no objection against its having, in the essential nature of the thing, a tendency to procure them. And the suppositions now mentioned do plainly show this, for they show that these hindrances are so far from being neces-

* Analogy, Part I. chap. iii.

sary that we ourselves can easily conceive how they may be removed in future states, and full scope be granted to virtue. And all these advantageous tendencies of it are to be considered as declarations of God in its favour. This, however, is taking a pretty large compass, though it is certain that, as the material world appears to be in a manner boundless and immense, there must be some scheme of Providence vast in proportion to it.*

Mr. T. There is something grand in these speculations of Butler, shadowed out as they are in such modest and moderate words. Of course we are discussing the question in the province of reason and analogy, and not in that of revelation.

Mr. L. We are not encroaching upon the domain of theology, but are keeping on the lower level, and whatever demands assent by methods of logical proof may be tested by the same methods. Law and sequence reign everywhere in the region of man's knowledge, and have formed his mind to the belief of their universal predominance. Penetrate far as he may into the past, they are never absent, and the future can only be thought of as under their rule; without them prevision and effort would be unknown, they are the terms that construe to his intelligence external phenomena. Applied to mental phenomena, they have a deeper significance, and include the moral effects produced upon sentient agents. Man expects a state of more perfect happiness as the result of more perfect order; the idea is congruous with his experience, and has thus established itself; but if it were otherwise—if order were not progressive but fortuitous, if it were the feebler force of the universe yielding up the supremacy and falling back upon anarchy, if this "battle of the warrior,"—though "with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood,"—be here a random and dubious conflict, man might say with Beatrice in "The Cenci"—

* Analogy, Part I. chap. iii.

“ If there should be
No God, no Heaven, no earth in the void world ;
The wide, grey, lampless, deep, unpeopled world !

.
If all things then should be—

.
The atmosphere and breath of my dead life !
.
Whoever yet returned
To teach the laws of death's untrodden realm ?
Unjust perhaps as those which drive us now,
Oh ! whither, whither ? ”

Mr. T. To Beatrice, in her utter misery, the constitution of the world seemed unjust, and she shrank from the future lest it should be like the present ; and there is between them a real analogy that warrants inferences from the one to the other ; but then the facts must be rightly apprehended, and in a serener atmosphere than Beatrice was surrounded by they have another aspect, and it is seen that pain is not indiscriminating and vengeful, but regulated and remedial discipline.

Mr. L. And if it be discipline its successful action may work its extinction. Wrong results both from ignorance and ill-intention, and its consequence is pain, near or remote. Again we may refer to the Bible. It asserts “ the servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes ” (Luke xii. 47, 48). Now, it seems unreasonable to beat a man with stripes, few or many, for that of which he is ignorant, unless we take it for granted that he is a rational agent, launched on a career of indefinite improvement, in a world where pain is the instrument by which he is taught and trained. The worth and meaning of true words is their agreement with facts. “ I speak as to wise men ; judge ye what I say ” (1 Cor. x. 15) ; and these words in St. Luke mean—as the facts are—that stripes are administered to ignorance and to ill design,

and are few or many according to the nature of the aberration they are to correct. Now, if the government of the world be a moral government, it must be uniform, and for the future tense of the apologue we may, in our reasoning, substitute the present, and say not only that he shall be hereafter beaten, but that he is so now.

Mr. T. Error can never be intentional, and yet pain may be its unvarying result. Shelley says—

“ If I have erred, there was no joy in error,
But pain and insult, and unrest and terror.”*

But may not pain indurate the mind?

Mr. L. To us, who only “know in part,” it may appear to do so. Circumstances interfere with our tests; nevertheless the world is not a chaos; pain is not purposeless, and is not mere torment.

“ This dread machinery
Of sin and sorrow would confound me else,
Devised—all pain, at most expenditure
Of pain by Who devised pain,—to evolve,
By new machinery in counterpart,
The moral qualities of man.”†

There is a correspondence between man's subjective nature and his objective circumstances, and as these are well or ill adjusted to one another, he is happy or otherwise, and the conditions of his life are or are not attained. It matters not how this law of his life is communicated to him,—whether by reason or by revelation,—he will be right as far as he is at one with it, and his capacity for enjoyment will be satisfied as he conforms to and comprehends it. Once more, we have the point stated in precise words in the Bible—“ If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them ” (John xiii. 17). Happiness is a product of the two factors—knowing and doing; and is, moreover, the final cause of them, and throughout their development is and should be their end and aim.

* Julian and Maddalo.

† The Ring and the Book.

Mr. T. (reads). “The plain truth is that no proposition can be more palpably and egregiously false than the assertion that, as far as this world is concerned, it is invariably conducive to the happiness of man to pursue the most virtuous career.” (Page 63.)

Mr. L. Mr. Lecky has before said—“Happiness is one of the most indeterminate and indefinable words in the language.” What, then, does he now mean by it? “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil” (Eccles. viii. 11). The experience of Solomon—with the dimmest, if any, anticipations of a future world—is at variance with Mr. Lecky’s dictum. The “sentence against an evil work” must be the bad consequences, near and remote, that it produces; and because they are not in all cases immediate, “the heart of the sons of men” foolishly assumes that it is “palpably and egregiously false” to believe that the most “virtuous career” is “invariably conducive to the happiness of man.”

Mr. T. Mr. Lecky can hardly mean, as a general rule, that a virtuous career is not the most happy, but that it is not invariably so.

Mr. L. We cannot dispel the ambiguity of the word happiness, as Mr. Lecky here uses it; we may say, man is so constituted that his powers and functions are fitted to produce more satisfaction in one way than in another, and that the greatest amount of satisfaction is produced by virtuous actions; and a few exceptions would not invalidate the rule. Industry is the surest road to wealth, and idleness to poverty; yet, if an idle man should grow rich, and an industrious one poor, we should not consider the general proposition in any degree weakened. Industry may be joined to foolishness, and idleness to shrewdness. The law of gravity is of universal application, and yet an ignorant observer might occasionally think it had been suspended because it was counteracted by some other law

that he was not acquainted with; and so the law that virtuous actions produce happiness may be apparently thwarted by the intervention of some other law which has been overlooked.

Mr. T. Mr. Lecky's proposition is a much more sweeping one than we have yet noted. He asserts that, so far as this world is concerned, a virtuous career is not even invariably "conducive" to the happiness of man. It is not single acts he speaks of, but a whole career of virtue, which he says is not always conducive to happiness. Surely this is a rash assertion.

Mr. L. If he had said it was not invariably conducive to worldly success, he might have been nearer the truth, but even then he should show that a man's want of success was due to his virtues and not to defects of knowledge and judgment; he ought to prove that a man had on his side all other qualities that conduce to happiness and success, and that his failure resulted from his virtue; a virtuous disposition does not counterbalance every deficiency of character, so far as happiness or success is concerned. But, again, by what right does Mr. Lecky limit the effects of a virtuous career to this world only? is it so certain that there is no other? And are the hopes and fears associated with another of no account? do they form no part of this world's retribution—increasing pleasure and inflicting pain? For, if they do, they must be reckoned with, like whatever else enters into the composition of happiness; and every grain of social distrust and hatred meted out to a man who injures society for his own assumed interest, must be weighed and measured before the final balance is struck.

Mr. T. (reads). "The possibility of often adding to the happiness of men by diffusing abroad, or at least sustaining, pleasing falsehoods, and the suffering that must commonly result from their dissolution, can hardly reasonably be denied. There is one, and but one, adequate reason that can always justify men in critically reviewing

what they have been taught. It is the conviction that opinions should not be regarded as mere mental luxuries; that truth should be deemed an end distinct from and superior to utility, and that it is a moral duty to pursue it whether it leads to pleasure or whether it leads to pain."

Mr. L. Mr. Lecky ought to tell us what he means by the word happiness, which he uses very vaguely. It is clear enough that men are sometimes under so strong a delusion "that they believe a lie" (2 Thess. ii. 11); and the lies are probably "pleasing;" and their "dissolution" the cause of some "suffering." But surely no one would contend that it is better, mentally or morally, to believe a "pleasing" falsehood than an unpalatable truth. No matter how "pleasing" falsehood may appear, a rational mind prefers truth. There are in the world hosts of pleasing lies, which men steadfastly believe and reluctantly part with. A railway company's accounts may be pleasing, while they are a heap of lies; and it cannot "reasonably be denied" that much "suffering" results from the "dissolution" of such lies. But the "dissolution" of all lies is only a question of time; and the happiness diffused abroad by lies and shams must, sooner or later, come to a painful end. Let a man entertain a sufficient number of pleasing falsehoods, and let their absurdity be sufficiently marked, and he will presently find himself in a madhouse; or let him manage his commercial affairs by pleasing falsehoods, and his happiness will be of short duration. Nor can it be supposed that in weightier matters the fate of pleasing falsehoods, if less traceable, is less destructive. In reference to man's condition and prospects in this world it is his "moral duty" to ascertain, as far as may be, what is truth, for upon the knowledge of it depends his happiness and well-being.

"Seeing ignorance is the curse of God,
Knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to heaven."*

A man engages in the pursuit of truth because he loves

* Shakespeare.

it; he seeks to know, because "knowledge is pleasant" (Prov. ii. 10). But if the condition of things were reversed—if to understand the relations in which he is placed only discovered and aggravated his wretchedness, and yielded him no enjoyment and no aid, it would not then be his "moral duty" to pursue such truth, any more than it is now a moral duty to torture and torment himself without an object. He has found by experience that truth and knowledge—and in this sense they are convertible terms—enable him to comprehend the laws and relations by which he is surrounded; and he has discovered that in proportion as he becomes acquainted with them, his lot in life is ameliorated and his power enlarged, and he goes forward with the firm assurance that this is a condition of things stable and permanent, and that truth is a possession which ever and everywhere has its reward. It is not, as Mr. Lecky puts it, "an end distinct from and superior to utility." It is because of its utility, because it is prolific of the means by which happiness is increased and multiplied amongst men, that it is worthy of being pursued. Show us a knowledge that is profitless, a truth that is utterly barren of all useful consequences—yielding and paying no tribute to man—an end and not a means—and we may safely affirm that it is no part of man's "moral duty" to pursue it. Mr. Lecky argues that the delusions we cling to in our ignorance are preferable to the doubt and the struggle which at length dispel them; as if to be "clothed and in his right mind," in however lowly a garb, were not a nobler thing for a man, than to be "monarch of all he surveys," in a madhouse.

Mr. T. Admitting that some men mentioned in the Bible have sought goodness for such rewards as it might possess or promise, and admitting that sentiments commending this conduct are found in the Bible, is this such evidence as overturns Mr. Lecky's proposition that, "in exact proportion as we believe a desire for personal

enjoyment to be the motive of a good act, is the merit of the agent diminished" ?

Mr. L. It will hardly be denied, whatever Mr. Lecky may say, that a man acts from the idea of some pleasure to be derived from the action. As a child, he acts in the business of learning from the pleasure it gives, or from the pleasure he receives from the approbation of his parents or instructors, or perhaps from fear of the pain they may inflict ; and the habits so formed, if wisely generated, become themselves sources of pleasure. Subsequent steps in life are made under the same influence, and with the same result.

Mr. T. The motive to an action then is the idea of some pleasure to be acquired by our own effort. That a motive should be the desire of pain is inconceivable, although Mr. Lecky asserts that the merit of an agent is diminished just as the desire of personal enjoyment is the motive of his act.

Mr. L. If men's actions and efforts are designed to secure their own advantage, and if the motive is that which moves to action, then the prospect of advantage constitutes the motive. Mr. Lecky may despise personal enjoyment, mankind do not ; but they do differ very widely as to what constitutes it. The causes of their pleasure or personal enjoyment are innumerable, and why good actions should be excluded from the catalogue, or, being sources of pleasure, why they should not be desired as such, is inconceivable.

Mr. T. It is reckoned mean and unworthy to act from interested motives.

Mr. L. It would be very remarkable for any one to act from motives in which he felt no interest ; the notion is repugnant, a man must feel interest in what moves him to act.

Mr. T. The motive, I suppose, is to be regarded solely as the impulse to action ?

Mr. L. The word is used loosely, but this seems its

proper signification. When Macbeth, meditating the murder of Duncan, says—

“ I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition,”

he implies that the motive which had stimulated him was flagging, and another motive, which pleased him better, was getting the mastery of it. He also says—

“ We will proceed no further in this business.
He hath honour'd me of late ; and I have bought
Golden opinions of all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.”

The golden opinions to be retained by loyal actions were, for the moment, more pleasurable ideas than the crown of Duncan to be gotten by murder. The motive to the murder was not the pleasure of killing, but the pleasurable idea of wearing a crown—a thing in no wise immoral; the motive that for an instant quelled it was the pleasure derived from golden opinions; and whichever motive finally prevailed, did so by its greater present pleasurable-ness. He swayed backward and forward as the idea of one or other pleasure acquired the ascendancy, and neither of them had strictly a moral quality :

“ I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent.”

It was the intent that constituted the guilt, the intention to obtain by murder the pleasure of a “kingly crown.” Macbeth did not like the act, it needed the “spur” of a powerful motive to overcome his reluctance, and it was only when the taunts of his wife were thrown into the scale that the balance turned. Her contemptuous opinion dashed to pieces the golden opinions that had stayed his hand, and the motive of ambition did its work.

Mr. T. Each of the motives acting upon him was the desire of personal enjoyment. The one motive led him

to crime, the other to abstain from it; and the damning fact against him was that he sought personal enjoyment by the injury of others. But that he should seek and receive it from the honour conferred upon him by Duncan, and from the golden opinions of all sorts of people, could not be derogatory to him.

Mr. L. If it is the natural consequence of good acts to command approbation—to win golden opinions, and if the approbation of others gives personal enjoyment, can it be immoral to desire it? or if moral approbation be the effect of which moral action is the cause, and if this be part of the order of things, can it be blamable in striving for the cause to desire also the effect?

Mr. T. I should say not.

Mr. L. Would you think it derogatory to a moral agent that he derived happiness from moral action?

Mr. T. Certainly not.

Mr. L. Or that, finding happiness in moral action, the motives to it—by reason of their pleasurable—operated always promptly and decisively?

Mr. T. I can see nothing derogatory in this. Delighting in moral action as a cause of happiness is the directing antecedent of delighting in it on account of its morality.

Mr. L. But its causing the happiness and wellbeing of moral agents is precisely what entitles it to be called moral.

Mr. T. But food and clothing do this.

Mr. L. Exactly. But then food and clothing are not actions; the act of giving food and clothing to the necessitous may be a good action, and so may the industry that earns them for one's self.

Mr. T. At any rate it is clear a man may find his happiness in good actions, and may come to think primarily of their goodness, and apparently derive pleasure from this source alone; but the product is not the less pleasure, and is caused by something of which it is the proper effect.

Mr. L. It is a mere truism to say that if the effect of moral action be pleasure, the cause of pleasure is moral action; and that if the cause be desirable it is no disparagement to desire the effect.

Mr. T. To put the question in the shortest way, is the action performed for the sake of the pleasure or for its own sake?

Mr. L. The two become so blended together by good culture and habit that they are not separable, and *that* is felt to be pleasurable which is known to be right.

Mr. T. And, under the same culture and conditions, that is felt to be painful which is known to be wrong.

Mr. L. We buy such things as books and pictures for the pleasure they give, and this no one disputes; though how a man should receive pleasure from a printed book must, to a savage, be a mystery. Now, think of another group of acts, not the mere personal class, like the buying of books, but acts bringing us into relation with our fellow-creatures, which are to us sources of the highest personal enjoyment. "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matt. xxv. 35). Why may not each of these acts be a cause of pleasure; and would they be performed if they were for ever as painful as the toothache? At first they may be performed from the pleasure of imitating some who are loved and admired. Then follows the distinct pleasure of alleviating sorrow, and then the habit of acting contributes its quota. No element may be exactly discriminated, but the product is properly pleasure.

Mr. T. The full consequences of habit need to be recognized, not only as giving facility of action but as making it pleasurable; we desire, say, some improvement in our own character, or some advancement in life, and each involves effort in a certain degree painful, but the

pleasurable idea of what is to be gained—the motive—keeps us steady, and then the effort itself becomes pleasure.

Mr. L. If the continued and persistent doing of what is not at first pleasing becomes pleasant, why should moral action be excluded from this law of our nature? Acting from habit in morals is not complained of, but when the habit is converted into pleasure and becomes a motive, it gets an indifferent name. Education and training, wisely directed, may form a disposition that responds promptly to the motives that produce moral actions, and the process may be one of pleasure, and this result seems to me the highest triumph of moral training.

Mr. T. Man's activities all yield pleasure greater or less. When nature wants a thing done she makes the doing of it pleasant. Pleasure is not a thing to be rejected, but selected. Pleasure that satisfies and stays proves itself suited to our nature and constitution, and may be sought without any reproach. Our literature boasts of the "Pleasures of the Imagination," the "Pleasures of Hope," and the "Pleasures of Memory." And though

"Pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower—the bloom is shed,
Or like the snowflake on the river,
A moment white—then gone for ever,"*

they are not all of this class. Human nature may at times be content with "husks," but it has a capacity for feeding on bread, and finding pleasure in it.

Mr. L. John Howard, in his quiet home in England, could not rest because of the miserable wretches immured in foreign prisons,—the burden of their sorrows oppressed him, and he devoted himself to their relief. His neighbour, John Smith, had an eager desire for objects of

* Burns.

beauty,—pictures, marbles, and manuscripts; he lived sparingly, he formed no family ties, he sought no society; he travelled far and wide in pursuit of his objects, endured many hardships, and at last, alone and in a foreign land, “in the worst inn’s worst room,” he died. Howard ameliorated the condition of some ruffians and some unfortunates, and humanized men’s thoughts, and left a noble example. Smith rescued from destruction an inestimable manuscript and a priceless picture; by the one he confirmed the hopes and by the other increased the pleasures of innumerable men, but this formed no part of his intention. The world rates these two men differently, and their objects were greatly different; but each found a certain pleasure in his work, and each sacrificed for it something he appreciated less; but the purpose of Howard was the loftier one, as the pleasure received from doing good to one’s degraded fellow-creatures surpasses that received from acts terminating on oneself. Howard’s ambition was to do something for others, Smith thought only of himself.

Mr. T. The Smiths are a large tribe, in whom the instinct of doing something for themselves is probably pretty well developed, but I do not recollect this particular one.

Mr. L. You will find a memoir of him in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*.

Mr. T. And you say that by original constitution, or by circumstances, he sought his pleasures in the way you describe; and that Howard, differently constituted, pursued different objects, deriving from them the satisfaction they were fitted to give?

Mr. L. Compel John Howard to devote his life to art treasures, and existence loses its interest and pleasure; compel John Smith to explore prisons and dungeons, and his life becomes joyless—unless in each case the employment is one needful for subsistence and is duly paid for. The pay of mental gratification would keep neither at his

work ; but the ingredient of a needed and substantial stipend overcomes the obstacle ; the work goes on, and gradually becomes pleasant. Howard and Smith, as stipendiaries, are brought pretty much to the same level, for their acts have little in them that is voluntary, and therefore little that is moral ; each works for himself, and has his reward. The work is done for the wages, and has, perhaps, some meed of merit. But moral approbation bestowed upon moral effort is also substantial enjoyment to him “ who can receive it ; ” and in the last resort a man has his own approbation when the conditions of his mental and moral constitution are satisfied, though the world be against him.

Mr. T. The idea of a reward is mostly associated with some extraneous thing, and the word is rather spoiled for expressing more refined gratification.

Mr. L. We may get too refined in our language. I know you don't like being knocked down by the sledge hammer of authority, but as we are considering what, after all, is only the dictum of Mr. Lecky, the dictum of St. Paul may be at least worth as much, and he says plainly, “ So run that ye may obtain ; ” obtaining therefore is to be the motive ; and he then adds, “ Every one that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things ; now they do it for a corruptible crown, and we for an incorruptible.” Whatever you may think of the comparison, the meaning is not to be mistaken : the athlete's object was a corruptible crown, the apostle's an incorruptible,—such is his own confession.

Mr. T. A reward of this magnitude offers of course an overwhelming motive.

Mr. L. That is not the question raised by Mr. Lecky, but this—Can the motive of personal enjoyment operate at all in moral action, without deteriorating the merit of the agent ? And the fact overlooked by Mr. Lecky is, that an incorruptible crown may be a mental state which creates and controls the sources of happiness. The lan-

guage in which ideas on this subject are expressed is that of man's earlier and ruder notions ; but the facts of his life and his faculties being at one, happiness ensues, larger capacities are developed, and the motives to expand and invigorate them operate unceasingly, whilst at every step they promote and stimulate personal enjoyment.

Mr. T. The machinery of man's nature, being adapted to its work, must have its counterpart in the condition of things and the rule of right under which he is placed, and the harmonious interaction of these is what you mean by happiness or personal enjoyment ; the desire therefore of this must be the indispensable prelude of man's improvement at every stage of his existence, from the lowest to the highest.

Mr. L. If the desire of personal enjoyment does, as Mr. Lecky says, deteriorate moral action, what is the goal to which human nature is tending ? If conformity to physical law means personal enjoyment "after its kind," why should adaptation to moral law have a different effect ? and if the one is desirable why not the other ? Mr. Lecky fails to discriminate between personal enjoyment and the causes of it ; but the causes are sought for their effects, and the causes may be anything, from a corruptible crown of parsley to an incorruptible one of power and activity and moral conquest. Of duty Wordsworth says—

" Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
Nor know we anything so fair,
As is the smile upon thy face."

Mr. T. (reads). " Among the many wise sayings which antiquity ascribed to Pythagoras, few are more remarkable than his division of virtue into two distinct branches—to seek truth, and to do good."

Mr. L. One scarcely sees the remarkable merit of this division. To seek truth is to do good after a particular manner. Doing good is the genus, of which seeking

truth is a species. It is comprehended within it, as a greater includes a less. Virtue therefore, according to this definition, is doing good; but good is a relative term, the boundaries of which must be settled by the condition and circumstances of the beings to whom it is applicable. Where "they neither marry nor are given in marriage," all the good that arises here from the conjugal relationship would be incomprehensible; and so it might be with other sorts of good. To do good we must know what it is, in relation to the persons who are to be affected by it. As the faculties and constitution vary, the relations may vary also. Good must represent an equation. Man is seeking truth when he investigates his various relations, and he attains it just as his subjective ideas correspond to objective realities, and he obtains good as this correspondence is worked out in his life. To do good needs not only the disposition to do it, but also a knowledge of what it is, for the disposition without the knowledge has not sufficed to keep the straight road.

Mr. T. (reads). "No discussions, I conceive, can be more idle than whether slavery, or the slaughter of prisoners in war, or gladiatorial shows, or polygamy, are essentially wrong. They may be wrong now; they were not so once."

Mr. L. This is a bold assertion for an intuitive moralist who maintains the immutability of moral distinctions, but whose theory here has so far perplexed him that the questions it ought to solve he pronounces more idle than any he can conceive. According to Mr. Lecky, cock-fighting and bull-baiting, though they may be wrong now, were not so once; and Mr. Lecky has here grown particularly cautious in his language; he does not positively assert that these things are wrong even now, all that he says is, *they may be*. Slavery may be wrong now—it was not so once! One would like to be informed when the transition from right to wrong took place. Cowper imbibed his hatred of slavery whilst it

had a most respectable name, just when his future friend John Newton of Olney was a slave trader; and Clarkson denounced it in the face of hostile Courts and Parliaments. Was it the Emancipation Act that made it morally wrong to hold slaves, or was the Act passed because it had been discovered that, economically and morally, slavery was a bad institution? If this latter were the fact, then slavery was always evil, unless the constitution of things has changed, and unless it was once good for men to possess absolute and uncontrolled power over other men and women. If neither of these propositions be true, then slavery was always one of those clumsy contrivances which, as producing a plentiful crop of evil—moral and material—is “essentially wrong;”. If Imperial Rome possessed a Clarkson or a Granville Sharp, who deplored the fallen condition of his country, and knew that—

“ Self-abasement paved the way,
To villain-bonds and despot sway ”—

he might have seen in the barbarities of the arena both a cause and an effect of the evil; but we learn from Mr. Lecky that he would have been mistaken. The Roman aristocracy, for their own purposes, pandered to the vile taste of the Roman populace; and Mr. Lecky tells us that these Roman holidays were not wrong. The indestructible interests of human nature have better interpreters than Mr. Lecky. Prejudices may warp men's mind, and ignorance may cloud them, but a remnant remains (like the seven thousand in Israel) who refuse to bow the knee to the Baals of the period, and who are not imposed upon by falsehoods and shams. Power and wealth may dazzle the multitude, and win a slavish applause to evil deeds, but the day of reckoning comes, and a solitary Elijah is seldom wanting to brave the tyrant of the hour—

“ And tell him that
His evil is not good.”

The hand that chiselled the dying Gladiator might have been that of a contemporary, instinct with all the indignation which glows in Byron's immortal stanzas, for Byron does but translate into words the feelings and conceptions which he finds in the sculptor's work—

“ I see before me the Gladiator lie ;
 He leans upon his hand, his manly brow
 Consents to death, but conquers agony,
 And his droop'd head sinks gradually low—
 And thro' his side the last drops, ebbing slow
 From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
 Like the first of a thunder shower ; and now
 The arena swims around him—he is gone,
 Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch
 who won.

He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
 Were with his heart, and that was far away ;
 He reck'd not of the life he lost, nor prize :
 But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
 There were his young barbarians all at play ;
 There was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,
 Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday—
 All this rush'd with his blood ; shall he expire,
 And unavenged ? Arise ! ye Goths, and glut your ire !”

Mr. T. Mr. Lecky actually extenuates the “gladiatorial shows,” by alleging that they “were originally a form of human sacrifice adopted through religious motives.”

Mr. L. This sort of apology only adds to the confusion ; if we assume that the gladiatorial shows were thus instituted, does religiousness of motive cure the “deep damnation” of an evil deed ? Wholesale slaughter was not a whit the less devilish because it was done to propitiate a devil who had usurped the place and name of a god. A thing utterly evil, notwithstanding what Mr. Lecky calls the “religious motives” in which it originates, remains evil ; roasting a man for his belief or disbelief is unalterably evil, though it may be done under the influence of

motives the most religious. Things are what they are, be the superstitions of men never so abject—

“Let’s write good angel on the devil’s horn,
’Tis not the devil’s crest.”*

Mr. T. Mr. Lecky fits into his system another piece of barbaric virtue. He says, “The rude nomadic life of savages rendering impossible the preservation of aged and helpless members of the tribe, the murder of parents was regarded as an act of mercy both by the murderer and the victim.”

Mr. L. The exigencies of Mr. Lecky’s theory must have pressed him very hard before he could have advanced such arguments in support of it. Men with an innate moral sense, it seems, regarded murder as mercy, and the murdered participated in the mistake; but after all they were perhaps not mistaken, and the brutal starvation to which the “helpless” were subjected, might advantageously be exchanged for the repose of death; which means that the morality of “savages” made life less desirable than death. What a mystification comes of these abstract words. “Benevolence,” Mr. Lecky tells us, “is always a virtuous disposition,” and surely “mercy” is not less so, and when it leads to systematic murder we must conclude that murder is a virtue; the murder of Napoleon’s soldiers at Jaffa was accounted by him an act of mercy, when their preservation became impossible. What an admirable disguise words furnish for all manner of hypocrisies. Instead of Mr. Lecky’s word “impossible,” read “inconvenient,” and the argument falls to the ground. There are in civilized life “nomadic savages,” who assure Boards of Guardians that it is “impossible” for them to provide for their “aged and helpless” parent, as the law requires, and as killing them is no longer reckoned an “act of mercy,” these savages are obliged either to undergo some privation themselves, and thus

* Measure for Measure.

contributes to the "preservation" of their helpless parents or they are made to expiate the "impossible" condition of their affairs by a few months' residence, with hard labour, in one of her Majesty's gaols. If Mr. Lecky's "nomadic savages," taking stock of their food, and finding not enough of it for all, quietly murdered the helpless—young or old—the act was a fiendish one; for those who in this fashion murder to-day will to-morrow as ruthlessly do it again for any cause or for none. But there was no calm inquiry and judicial murder, the "helpless" were the weak, whose labour no longer left the strong leisure to loaf about, and weakness had the misfortune to consume food instead of producing it; the cupboard of the savage was bare, his appetite fierce, his passion unrestrained, and his "helpless" parent or partner paid the penalty, and then—

" You might see
The longings of the cannibal arise."

Mr. T. (reads). " Nearly all moralists would acknowledge that a few instances of immorality would not prevent the excursion train from being on the whole a good thing. All would acknowledge that very numerous instances would more than counter-balance its advantages. . . . The impossibility of drawing in such cases a distinct line of division is no argument against the intuitive moralist, for that impossibility is shared to the full extent by his rival."

Mr. L. As Mr. Lecky cannot determine the question by an intuitive standard, but is compelled to calculate the balance of advantages, he conforms to the rule I contend for. Some cases are easier of determination than others, and the process by which the conclusion is arrived at may often be overlooked, but if we are ever compelled to balance good and evil to get at a result, why is the method not always available? One man will tell you shortly that to work on Sunday is to break the Sabbath, and there is

an end of it; but even he is obliged to discriminate between work of different kinds—allowing one sort, and forbidding another; so that his ultimate standard must be authority or utility; and words of authority must be measured by their agreement with things, which are the final, most cogent, and inflexible of interpreters.

Mr. T. (reads). “The moralists I am defending assert that we possess a natural power of distinguishing between the higher and lower parts of our nature.”

Mr. L. In the course of Mr. Lecky’s first chapter he uses these words—higher and lower, as applied to man’s nature, some twenty or thirty times, without ever explaining what he means by them. High and low are but figurative words applied to moral subjects, and we want to know what is the specific quality on account of which they are so distinguished. To say merely of man’s enjoyments they are higher or lower throws little light upon them; one sort may be more social than another, they may be more durable, more under control, may have more variety and less satiety; they are therefore higher because they are more beneficial in their consequences :

“Man might live at first
The animal life; but is there nothing more?
In due time, let him critically learn
How he lives; and the more he gets to know
Of his own life’s adaptabilities
The more joy-giving will his life become:
The man who hath this quality is best!”*

Mr. T. Mr. Lecky says “we possess a natural power;” and “we,” for the purposes of his argument, must mean mankind; but in the early stages of society the muscular part of man’s nature is mostly reckoned higher than any other; he has certainly a natural power of “distinguishing between” strength and weakness, he finds it “excellent to have a giant’s strength,” but has he

* Cleon, by Robert Browning.

primitively any notion that it is hateful and "tyrannous to use it like a giant?"

Mr. L. I should say not. But suppose we want to graduate this scale of higher or lower to our own social circumstances, where are we to look for the "natural power?" We may assume that what is morally right is higher than its opposite, and we ask, is it morally right for a man to marry his deceased wife's sister? And if we cannot decide the question by an appeal to some law of acknowledged obligation, we must try it by an appeal to the circumstances of society, and to the various interests affected by it, and we conclude it is moral or immoral as one or other set of considerations preponderate. If, during a lengthened period, the law has forbidden such marriages, then the feeling of the people,—what would be called their "intuitive perception," would pronounce them wrong; but let the law be altered under the force of discussion and example, and in a certain time it will come to pass that such marriages will be contracted without any consciousness of wrong—the former "intuitive perception" notwithstanding. Mr. Lecky has said that "to the great majority of mankind it will probably appear, in spite of the doctrine of Paley, that no multiple of the pleasure of eating pastry can be equivalent to the pleasure derived from a generous action. It is not that the latter is so inconceivably intense. It is that it is of a higher order." Mr. Lecky is sadly addicted to grand assertions. What may appear to the majority of mankind is more easy to affirm than to prove, and I fancy that to hungry savages the eating of a quantity of pastry would be a greater pleasure than remaining hungry and generously bestowing the pastry upon fellow-savages. A well-regulated mind, not goaded by an empty stomach, would soon decide between a generous action and the pleasure of eating pastry, and no doubt the former kind of pleasure is of a "higher order" than the latter, but how is the comparison to be made? If generous actions were always injurious

in their operations and their results, who would perform them? Just as, if eating pastry invariably produced disease and death, no one would touch it.

Mr. T. The eating of pastry is a solitary pleasure, the doing a generous act a social one, and the social is worth more than the solitary, as "two are better than one" (Eccles. iv. 9). But there must be a trial before there can be a verdict; the pleasure of eating, to young children, is commonly greater than the pleasure of being generous; the latter has to be cultivated, and may be partially inherited, but the normal instinct is

"That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can."

What affects the individual is felt first, what concerns others comes into play later.

Mr. L. Generosity implies that there are in the world wants and pains and the means of alleviating them, and that a certain feeling is associated with the act; cancel any of the items, and generosity changes or ceases; or, if giving created positive mischief, the impulse in a reasonable mind would be restrained by the same principle that now forbids us to seek gratification by the injury of another. A moral action is one that does more good than harm, and when the pleasure of being generous produces an overbalance of bad consequences it is no longer a virtue but a weakness; the experience of mankind on this subject is embodied in the maxim that we should be just before we are generous, which means that the consequences of just actions are of more value to society than the consequences of generous ones; and if we had instruments that could as accurately and certainly measure other kinds of actions, we should have as little doubt respecting them.

Mr. T. These two sets of actions—the generous and the just—have been observed and estimated, and it has been found out that the just ones are of more value than the

generous ones, and the conclusion appears in the form of a maxim, and you say that experience can as truly teach the value of other actions, and that such value is, as in this case, their utility. A moral action you say is one that does more good than harm ; but then what is meant by the word good ?

Mr. L. The word good, as I understand it, expresses some special quality of objects affecting man's sentient nature. Man only knows these objects as they affect him ; they do not always affect him in the same degree and manner, hence the various estimates he forms of them. In some departments of life the estimates are tolerably constant, the relations are simple, and the results uniform ; physical good is much the same to everybody. But as relations become more complex differences arise ; when we get out of the sphere of the simply physical into that where living agents act upon one another, the conditions are more involved : The problem, however, is still the same—to bring the relations into harmony ; or, in other words, to get out of them the most of what they possess which is felt to be good ; the word good here standing for something more than mere physical good, and comprehending whatever the profounder relations of sentient minds is able to bestow. Physical good the individual chooses for himself, subject to physical law ; but when his actions affect the welfare of others their estimates must be reckoned with, and the larger the number affected the more arduous the reckoning ; the problem is not altered, only complicated ; the sentient nature of an ever-increasing number has to be cared for and considered in its reciprocal action ; the relations include new consequences, and the rules that regulate them undergo a corresponding change, but the end is always the same,—good, derivable from the relations ; and it is found as before, in their adjustment to each other ; more subtle and delicate machinery may be at work,—a sentient nature of wider compass, but objects

sued to it exist, which it seeks, and those which confer the greatest benefits are most valuable or useful. Utility, in its widest signification, becomes the ultimate law that regulates action, and useful is a name for the cause of good.

Mr. T. So that, when Mr. Lecky objected to utility as the measure of virtue, because it would imply, as he said, that a fruitful field or a navigable river being useful would possess the element of virtue, he might equally have objected to the word good, for if a field is useful the crop may be good, and if a navigable river is useful the water of it may be good.

Mr. L. Certainly, the one word is open to the same objection as the other, for they both represent multifarious things, and the things most useful as developing in their order and proportion the powers and relations of a living agent must be causes of his greatest good; the same things might not be the greatest good of a differently organised being, for that will be its good which is adapted to the organisation.

Mr. T. The word is frequently used in an abstract way, as if there were good apart from good things. Mark Antony says "the evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones," and in this form the word suggests the idea of good distinct from good acts and their consequences. Dr. McCosh has this strange proposition, "The good is good, altogether independent of the pleasure it may bring."*

Mr. L. Good is a word made by man to express some quality of the objects that affect him, and it is clear he could not have had the word until he had the previous experience of something to which he could apply it, and this was of course the pleasure or feeling produced in his mind. Independent of this feeling or pleasure the word has no meaning; a thing may indeed be good independent of the pleasure it brings to particular agents; but it is a

* The Intuitions of the Mind, Book IV. s. 111.

misnomer to call that good which brings no pleasure to any sentient nature in the universe. In every one of its phases good is a name for what brings pleasure to sentient agents, and apart from or independent of such agents the word would be unintelligible. It expresses a relation between what is subjective and what is objective, and when the relation is destroyed there is nothing to be named; if we are dealing with a perceiving agent, and naming things as perceived or felt by it, when the perception is abolished nothing can be predicated.

Mr. T. Resistance is a word that expresses the feeling received from an object we call hard; annihilate the feeling, and the word hard would have no place in our vocabulary.

Mr. L. So far as we know good, it is an attribute of things as they affect sentient agents, using the word in its largest meaning. Hooker says, "The end for which we are moved to work is sometimes the goodness which we conceive of the very working itself, without any further respect at all, and the cause that procureth action is the mere desire of action, no other good besides being thereby intended. . . . All things are somewhat in possibility, which as yet they are not in act. And for this cause there is in all things an appetite or desire whereby they incline to something which they may be, and when they are it they shall be perfecter than they now are. All which perfections are contained under the general name of goodness. And because there is not in the world anything whereby another may not some way be made perfecter, therefore all things that are, are good."*

Mr. T. They are good as satisfying some part of man's nature, and whatever does so, high or low, he calls good.

Mr. L. And moral good is this particular relation at

* Ecclesiastical Polity. Book I.

its best, bestowing the most good, through the appropriate means; we become acquainted with moral good mainly through laws and rules which experience has discovered and enjoined, and the reason or foundation of them is the well-being of those who are affected by them. Hooker calls his great work, "Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity," and though so limited in subject, it opens with the discussion of the nature of good, tracing law to the desire of good. He says, "To return to our former intent of discovering the natural way whereby rules have been found out concerning the goodness wherewith the will of man ought to be moved in human actions; as everything naturally and necessarily doth desire the utmost good and greatest perfection whereof nature hath made it capable, even so man. Our felicity, therefore, being the object and accomplishment of our desire, we cannot choose but wish and covet it. All particular things which are subject unto action the will doth so far forth incline unto, as Reason judgeth them better for us, and consequently the more available to our bliss. If Reason err, we fall into evil, and are so far forth deprived of the general perfection we seek; seeing, therefore, that for the framing of men's actions the knowledge of good from evil is necessary, it only resteth that we search how this may be had. . . . We know things either as they are in themselves or as they are in mutual relation one to another. The knowledge of that which man is, in reference unto himself and other things in relation unto man, I may justly term the mother of all those principles which are as it were edicts, statutes, and decrees, in that law of nature whereby human actions are framed. . . . Good doth follow unto all things by observing the course of their nature; and, on the contrary side, evil by not observing it."

Mr. T. Our friend Dr. Twilight has some supersensitive idea of good which is offended at this sort of definition, although he does not contest the assertion that "every

creature of God is good " (1 Tim. iv. 4), and that creature here is a very wide word.

Mr. L. Like many others, Dr. Twilight seems to think that the abstract is something more than man's method of manipulating the concrete, and that the abstract contains some ingredient not to be found in the concrete, but no such thing can be known. Hooker, you will observe, applies the word good to whatever is desirable, and the abstract is goodness—which is therefore desirableness; and, if we are consistent in our language, moral good is desirable for the same reason that other good is so—because it conduces to the wellbeing of sentient agents.

Mr. T. Things then are good or evil as sentient agents perceive them to be so; but the perception does not constitute them good or evil. It is only the means of becoming acquainted with it. Actions, for example, have the quality of doing good or harm, and are named accordingly; but the naming may be done loosely and ignorantly, and the sentient agent, properly instructed, finds by degrees a true standard; the alteration is on the side of the sentient agent, and is brought about by the teaching of facts, by the

"Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Mr. L. What the sentient agent means by the words good or evil, can only be known as we know the particular things the words represent to his mind. When St. Paul, arguing for the existence of a supreme ruler of the world, said, "He left not himself without witness, in that he did good," he explained the word by the fact that "He gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts xiv. 17). This is tangible good, to be appreciated by the senses; other good, to be otherwise appreciated, reveals itself by appropriate consequences. If, as Hooker argues, man may be the perfecter by whatever good is to be found in

the world, moral good is that by which he is made most perfect, and therefore most happy, and for this reason only it is entitled to the name of good.

Mr. T.

“There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
Would man observingly distil it out.”*

This sentiment does not confuse the two things together ; but points to that chemistry of mind by which helps are distilled from impediments and hindrances—things in a certain sense evil ; the word evil includes so large a class of objects that when it stands alone it is not always easy to say which sort it refers to.

Mr. L. The fundamental notion conveyed by it is of something antagonistic to human interests ; whatever be the form, this is the substance. “Things evil” may be anything which man’s nature finds to be injurious. Hooker says “man’s observation of the law of his nature is righteousness ;” and the term law of his nature, taken comprehensively, and including every subordinate rule, furnishes a standard of right, the disregard of which, sooner or later, brings evil of every sort.

Mr. T. Dr. Twilight has a violent antipathy to such words as law and nature, when they assume any relationship to a word like righteousness.

Mr. L. Dr. Twilight is rather narrow and technical, and is apt to be “mastered by a modern term,” and I prefer Hooker, who further says, “The nature of goodness being thus ample, a law is properly that which reason in such sort defineth to be good that it must be done. And the law of reason or human nature is that which men by discourse of natural reason have rightly found out themselves to be all for ever bound unto in their actions.”† If this be true of moral good, it is not less true of other good ; each has to be found out by natural reason, which herein has final jurisdiction.

* King Henry V.

† Ecclesiastical Polity, Book I.

Mr. T. And in many cases the "wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot err therein." What is good he knows to be so, and what is evil is equally plain.

Mr. L. This is true in the limited sense we have remarked before; for man has drugged and sophisticated his mind until he has mistaken the plain qualities of things—he has called evil good, and good evil; he has put darkness for light, and light for darkness; he has put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter (Isaiah v. 20). The things had these palpable properties, they were injurious or they were beneficial, and he dealt with each as he should have dealt with its opposite; what was bitter he pronounced to be sweet, and cherished with a fanatical zeal. To an uncorrupted sense the bitterness was patent and the darkness too; an opinion or a belief that hindered his good he has clung to with a blind devotion; his theories have been at war with facts, but he has disregarded the facts; he has even fed on ashes (Isaiah xliv. 20), protesting they were a wholesome and succulent food.

Mr. T. And the men who asserted that they were arid and indigestible were persecuted, and made to expiate their temerity "in dens and caves of the earth," and in dungeons and fetters.

Mr. L. As if the world were already so full of knowledge and happiness that it needed no more; whereas, generation after generation, it has been amenable to the reproach of Isaiah,—“they have not known nor understood” (chap. xliv. 18).

Mr. T. The men of whom this was written were makers of wooden idols, who were distinctly derided for their work, which was proved, moreover, to be palpably absurd; yet the logic may not have convinced any of them, for delusions of this sort lose no credit with their votaries because they are proved to be unreasonable.

Mr. L. Nay, they often enough induce an incompetence to deal with facts, and this seems to have been their effect on the persons Isaiah describes, for he affirms

they had "neither knowledge nor understanding to say . . . Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (Isaiah xlv. 19, 20). Now a lie is just a vital disagreement between some fact and some representation of it.

Mr. T. And though the representation should be believed by all the world, it would not, according to your definition, be the less a lie; the universal belief of the immobility of the earth would thus be believing a lie; and though the word is often applied more restrictedly, the writer whom you have quoted evidently uses it with a large signification.

Mr. L. The word commonly means a representation intentionally false; but this is not the whole of its meaning, for we have before seen that men are sometimes in the mental condition of believing a lie (2 Thess. ii. 11), which must be the believing what is contrary to fact and truth. Any belief, therefore, of this kind, is not inappropriately called a lie.

Mr. T. Even though the means may not exist of proving it to be so, nor the attitude of mind be formed which could apprehend the truth?

Mr. L. Until the facts were reasoned out the idea of the earth's form and motion could not be entertained, and what would be called the common sense notion would universally prevail, until new and better evidence displaced it.

Mr. T. And if the new and better evidence had not been forthcoming, the false representation must have continued to be the common belief; and so the large mass of men's ideas, which cannot be brought into contact with the objective existence they are assumed to represent, may very widely diverge from the reality.

Mr. L. And there is no guarantee against this, except in the prevalence of the "knowledge and understanding," appealed to by the writer we have quoted; for knowledge is acquaintedness with facts, and understanding the power of construing them. It is not necessary to suppose

that the men who put darkness for light and light for darkness did so of evil design; it has often enough been done "ignorantly," and the means did not exist of knowing better, which is just saying, intuitive knowledge did not exist, for means are the processes and steps by which man arrives at knowledge, whilst intuitions are direct and immediate.

Mr. T. St. Paul asserts of certain men that they were "without excuse," because that which it behoved them to know might be "clearly seen" and "understood by the things that are made" (Rom. i. 20); moral information for the guidance of their lives was to be gathered by observation and inference, and to be understood, and the implication is, that if information and intelligence were not in equilibrium, the men would stand "excused."

Mr. L. And this is the universal postulate underlying every real notion of moral blame—

"Call ignorance my sorrow, not my sin."*

But if "the things that are made" have given to man an uncertain sound, the words, which so poorly adumbrate the things, increase the liability to error;

"Art may tell a truth
Obliquely, do the thing shall breed the thought,
Nor wrong the thought, missing the mediate word."*

Man often wrongs the thought, missing the mediate word, and has probably done so when most fiercely anathematizing whoever has distrusted the particular mediate word by which he has designated some specially intangible thought.

Mr. T. We have now some idea how the strata of the earth were deposited and dislocated, but to speak of them as "things that are made," gives no information as to the method; if we would learn how they came into the present state we are not helped at all by the words "they

* The Ring and the Book.

were made," which are indeed an answer to another question. The word "made" does no doubt convey the idea of something put together as it stands, and not the idea of a lengthened process, such as there is reason to believe the earth has undergone. The facts must be disclosed before we can know them, and the words which antedate the revelation of the facts are mostly mere symbols, conveying no real ideas.

Mr. L. The idea represented by the word "made," could only be such an idea as the facts they were acquainted with enabled the men who used it to express, and just in so far as the idea differed from the form of the fact it was erroneous. A recent writer says, "a true proposition is one which excites in the mind thoughts or images corresponding to those which would be excited in the mind of a person so situated as to be able to perceive the facts to which the proposition relates."* The man in whose mind a proposition does not produce this effect is, so far as the variation exists, in error, and a word that excites an idea unlike the reality, is also a source of error. Those who called evil good, and good evil, might at some time be corrected, but there are words that cannot be compared with what they stand for, and which in different minds may always represent divergent ideas.

Mr. T.

" In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice ;
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law : but 'tis not so above ;
There is no shuffling—there the action lies
In his true nature." †

An action then has a true nature, call it what you will, and does not depend, as Mr. Lecky puts it, on chronology ; and the question is, Can it even here act contrary to its true nature by any amount of shuffling ? Being bitter,

* Indian Evidence Act, Introduction.

† Hamlet.

can it have the property of what is sweet? And what are its properties but its effects upon the condition of man?

Mr. L. .

“ Man's mind—what is it but a convex glass
Wherein are gathered all the scattered points
Picked out of the immensity of sky? ” *

The scattered points, the phenomena of life reflected in his mind, are the materials of his knowledge; they are the causes, of which his feelings and thoughts are the effects; they may not create feeling and thought, but awaken and fashion them; and if there be any contrariety between the two sets of things, feeling and thought must modify themselves, for the phenomena will not alter to accommodate them. Man's business is to ascertain what the phenomena mean, and from the individual facts to work out a theory that corresponds with them; to look below the surface into their real import; to “judge not according to appearance;” and in morals appearance is no more to be depended upon than in other things.

Mr. T. We often speak of the mind as though it were a congeries of faculties, not a homogeneous power working upon different materials, according to their nature and properties. It is necessary to have names for the different operations of the mind, but not to suppose that the mind itself is divided into separate faculties; in the acquisition of knowledge different processes are required. The constant use of language implying that the mind is a cluster of faculties is no doubt misleading; and the words moral sense and common sense, though capable of an intelligible meaning, are often employed in a loose way, as if there were some department in the mind corresponding to them.

Mr. L. The simplest and truest expression is that the man does this or that,—he reasons, imagines, or feels; the compound nature of man does the work, but the facts

* The Ring and the Book.

present themselves under different aspects, and so are handled in different ways. Common sense, one would think, should mean the common agreement upon some subject by a number of men having equal opportunities and means of judging. Take any large number of men possessing the same endowments, which they have exercised under the same circumstances, and their agreement on any subject may properly enough be called their common sense—the common conclusion they have arrived at; but words like these, originally ambiguous, pick up new meanings as they go along, and so common sense, in common language, becomes a faculty or department of the mind; and the words moral sense may have had their signification similarly modified.

Mr. T. But neither such common sense nor moral sense ensures rectitude of judgment. Men's common sense assured them that the earth was stationary and flat, and their moral sense (in your application of the term) has been equally misled.

Mr. L. No one supposes that the common sense or agreement of mankind respecting the figure or motion of the earth is of any value, and their notions in morals have often had no better foundation. In her conversation with Emilia, Desdemona says—

“ Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong
For the whole world.”

To which Emilia replies—“Why, the wrong is but a wrong i' the world; and having the world for your labour, 'tis a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.” So long as right is only convention, Emilia's conclusion is just; but if this be a world governed by law, things cannot be dealt with in so arbitrary a fashion.

Mr. T. And the proofs which alone are admissible are the results dominant in the world.

Mr. L. “By their fruits ye shall know them;” prin-

ciples that produce good fruits are good principles, and good fruits are the dispositions and deeds which bring durable and controllable happiness. If some men deny that such dispositions and deeds yield happiness, we cannot help it—they may also deny the figure and motion of the earth, but it moves notwithstanding; and is it less certain that well-being is the final cause of well-doing, or that the law which enjoins well-doing can only vindicate itself by producing fruits of well-being?

Mr. T. Mr. Lecky's argument reminds me of one or two extracts from Butler which I found in your commonplace book. He says—"Were treachery, violence, and injustice, no otherwise vicious than as foreseen likely to produce an overbalance of misery to society, then, if in any case a man could procure to himself as great advantage by an act of injustice as the whole foreseen inconvenience likely to be brought upon others by it would amount to, such a piece of injustice would not be faulty or vicious at all, because it would be no more than in any other case for a man to prefer his own satisfaction to another's in equal degrees."* What do you say to this?

Mr. L. One differs from Bishop Butler with very great hesitation, because he is so cautious and profound a thinker. But the argument he puts here seems seriously defective; first, we have a right to ask, as a matter of fact, Whether it has not been proved that injustice is distinctly injurious to men? For, if so, the "misery" it is "foreseen likely" to "produce" in some particular case, though apparently less than usual, would not justify its performance, because experience has proved in reference to it not only what is "likely" but what is. Then, "the whole foreseen inconvenience" of injustice may be but a small portion of what is foreseeable if our information were more extended and more perfect. Again, who is to determine whether "the whole foreseen inconvenience

* The Introduction to the Analogy.

of an act of injustice" will overbalance or not the "misery to society"? Is it to be the man who desires to perpetrate the injustice or the man who is to suffer it, or is it to be some impartial spectator whose verdict is already upon record? And, as the question is to depend upon what is "foreseen likely," suppose the likelihood is falsified—what then? The experiment has been often tried, and the result is no longer doubtful. Butler says elsewhere—"We conclude that virtue must be the happiness, and vice the misery of every creature."* His present hypothesis is inconsistent with this conclusion. If a poison in some particular case did not cause death, should we therefore be entitled to argue that was not poisonous? and if the experience of mankind has proved that the whole "foreseen inconvenience" of acts of injustice does overbalance the advantages, any man who proceeds upon an opposite theory does so at his peril, and acts as wisely as he who should choose to disregard some other well ascertained law. Men do injustice and are punished, and men do it and apparently escape, but they may be deteriorated and hurt by it, though it may be an unobserved process to those who look on, as Macbeth's mind was "full of scorpions," though they were visible to no one. Butler says—"The constitution of nature is such that delay of punishment is no sort nor degree of presumption of final impunity."† What then becomes of "inconvenience" "foreseen likely" to occur? Is "the constitution of nature" to determine our actions, or ill-regulated desire of what is fancied or "foreseen likely"? And, as we are constituted, what is "punishment" but the consequence of antecedent wrong? Why is the vanity or egotism of one man, with no more faculty than his fellows, to reverse the plain and unambiguous verdict of generations of

* *Dissertation on the Nature of Virtue.*

† *Analogy, Part I. chap. ii.*

men? Butler's case breaks down. The "whole foreseen inconvenience likely to be brought upon others" by Jacob's treachery to Esau, might seem to be overbalanced by the advantage he procured to himself. But it was not so. As Macbeth says—

"In these cases
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor; this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips."

Mr. T. Butler goes on to say—"The fact then appears to be, that we are constituted so as to condemn falsehood, unprovoked violence, injustice; and to approve of benevolence to some preferably to others, abstracted from all consideration, which conduct is likeliest to produce an overbalance of happiness or misery."

Mr. L. Man is so constituted that he comes to condemn and approve what was once indifferent to him, and, I assume it is the hurtfulness or advantage of the things that has excited the feelings. Is not this plain matter of fact? Men, as represented to us in history, have approved falsehood, and many other such like things, which seemed profitable to them. Their successors, better instructed, have condemned them, and this better instructedness is mainly the net result of the interaction between the faculties of man and the facts of his position, or of the relations in which he is placed. The relations are permanent, and produce results tending towards stability. Relations have been perverted and misunderstood, and have needed rectification; the lesson has been slowly learned by what Butler calls the "inconvenience" of ill-adjusted relations. What legislators find to be hurtful they pronounce to be wrong; what man has partially done for himself they do for society, adding to acts which are hurtful the opprobrium of wrong. Butler's statement should be transposed thus

—We have come to know what conduct is likeliest to produce an overbalance of happiness or misery. Falsehood, unprovoked violence, and injustice, are of the class which produce misery, and benevolence of that which yields happiness; and on this account we approve or condemn, and by all the means in our power prevent or promote such actions. From the antecedent of their hurtfulness follows (in speculation) the consequent of their wrongfulness. So long as certain relationships have existed or continue to exist, the actions which are in antagonism to them are and have been evil. It is a question of fact to be determined by evidence; and all the apparatus of man's emotional nature is quickly excited against an act that is proved by appropriate evidence to hurt individuals and communities—moral disapprobation is created by evidence of moral injury. Butler says in the same dissertation—"Our sense or discernment of actions as morally good or evil implies in it a sense or discernment of them as of good or ill desert." But good or ill desert is the subjective feeling which is the counterpart of the good or ill consequences of our acts. The ill desert is what they deserve, or rather the ill consequences which the ill-doer has earned. Desert belongs to the agent, and not properly to the act. The act is a bad one, and the agent deserves, as we judge, a certain quantity of pain on account of it. The existence of a well-ordered community is incompatible with unchecked injustice, and its felt ill desert or ill reputation is the measure of the injury it inflicts, according to the standard which happens to prevail. Now, if society would be disintegrated and broken up in presence of universal injustice, single acts of injustice must carry within them the seeds of ultimate mischief; and what is thus pernicious to society is so because of its ill consequences to individuals, both agent and patient. What is detrimental to all cannot be advantageous to any.

Mr. T. Butler has another statement bearing on the subject which is worth considering. He says—"Perhaps Divine goodness, with which, if I mistake not, we make very free in our speculations, may not be a bare, simple disposition to produce happiness; but a disposition to make the good, the faithful, the honest man happy."*

Mr. L. I always hesitate in differing from Butler, but I think it a more correct representation of the fact to say, a disposition to make men happy by making them good, faithful, and honest. The road to intelligent happiness is by the way of confirmed goodness, faithfulness, and honesty. First by obtaining a clear apprehension of what the things are, and then by a well-directed and steady pursuit of them. Man has a threefold nature—physical, intellectual, and emotional. A disordered physical nature may mar the working of both the intellectual and the emotional, and so destroy or diminish his happiness; but if the whole three are in full and harmonious action, happiness must be the result.

Mr. T. You say that hurtfulness is the mark of wrongfulness, that intellectual blunders produce penalties corresponding to their nature and character, and that ignorance and pervertedness in morals are even more destructive of the happiness of men.

Mr. L. There can, I think, be no doubt of this. What criterion of the wrongfulness of an act can be more conclusive and deterrent than that it is productive of present pain, or burdened with the future prospect of it? The existence of a moral and beneficent Governor of the universe is hardly conceivable if this condition of things were reversed. Butler postulates the possibility of some act of injustice producing more profit than pain, but then the balance must be truly adjusted, the injustice must be a real and not merely a conventional thing, and in

* Analogy, Part I. chap. ii.

estimating it the disposition must be taken into account, and every consequence, near or remote, that springs from it. Besides, at what stage of the world's history are we to appraise unjust actions? When society, well knowing what is evil, and well armed against it, makes every culprit feel, with unflinching certainty, not only the weight of its moral indignation but the legal penalty that must be endured? Shall we make the calculation at this juncture, or must we cast up the account in a state of general lawlessness, "when every man does whatsoever is right in his own eyes"? (Deut. xii. 8.)

Mr. T. The words you have quoted are prefaced by a command that every man should not do what was right in his own eyes. Now, this may mean his own conception or thoughts, or, as Mr. Lecky puts it, his intuitions; and he was instructed in his actions not altogether to follow his own eyes, or notions, or intuitions.

Mr. L. This is quite true; and wherever this form of words is found, it is in connection with some lawless and immoral act which had been done, the explanation of which is, that every man did what was right in his own eyes,—not what was wrong, but what was right according to his own idea; and the consequence was that the country was in a state of moral anarchy.

Mr. T. Suppose it should be said that in this case what is right in a man's own eyes means whatever his inclination leads him to, and does not imply moral judgment at all.

Mr. L. I know that words of this kind may be made to take almost any shade of meaning that suits the ruling theory of a man's mind; and it is hardly possible to fix them to a strict and determinate signification when they are closely interrogated.

Mr. T. In a note in his Sermon, "On the Love of our Neighbour," Butler says, "There are certain dispositions of mind, and certain actions, which are in themselves

approved or disapproved by mankind, abstracted from the consideration of their tendency to the happiness or misery of the world; approved or disapproved by reflection,—by that principle which is the guide of life, the judge of right and wrong; numberless instances of this kind might be mentioned. There are pieces of treachery which in themselves appear base and detestable to every one.” This is something like what Mr. Lecky says, except that with Butler the things are “base and detestable to every one,” whilst with Mr. Lecky they may be right and approved at some periods of the world’s history.

Mr. L. This statement is much the same as the other, but then what is meant by “approved or disapproved by mankind”? Does it mean all mankind, or a select portion of them? Plainly the latter, for the verdict of all mankind is not attainable; and the proposition is thus reduced to a very insignificant one, for select portions of mankind have approved and disapproved the most contradictory things. The next question would be,—Are the dispositions and actions referred to in fact baneful or beneficial? have these consequences been felt, and known, and registered, among the experiences of men? and if so, is it not on this account that they have been approved or disapproved? Solomon asks, Is there any taste in the white of an egg? and we may ask is there any moral flavour in an act which is neither hurtful nor beneficial? Society finds certain acts to be hurtful, and makes them unlawful; but the generations which grew up under the notion of their unlawfulness may not carry their view backward to that of their antecedent hurtfulness; just so the “dispositions and actions” to which Butler alludes, having been found good or bad in their consequences, come to be designated right or wrong, and approved or disapproved;—right or wrong, in relation to a rule which has for its object human happiness. Is not this a fair representation of the matter? For we cannot get away

from the notion that wrong implies the infraction of a rule, and rules regarding human conduct are or ought to be framed with a view to human happiness.

Mr. T. Butler adds, "that numberless instances of this kind might be mentioned. There are pieces of treachery which in themselves appear base and detestable to every one." It is a pity that out of the numberless instances he thought of he did not furnish us with a few.

Mr. L. But you notice that he picks out "pieces of treachery" as such instances. Now, I ask you to recollect the special "piece of treachery" perpetrated by Jael, and recorded in the 4th chapter of Judges; a "piece of treachery" as "base and detestable" as is to be found in history. Observe, there was no feud or hostility between Jabin and the house of Heber, to which Jael belonged; hotly pursued by his enemies, Sisera passed near her tent; she came out to him, and with flattering and hypocritical words inveigled him in; with a lavish and ostentatious hospitality she sought to allay any lurking suspicion; and when her confiding victim, overpowered with weariness, was "fast asleep," she foully murdered him; and for this deed of blood she received the unbounded approbation of Deborah, who is called a prophetess, and who was manifestly a woman of great intelligence and power. We have here, then, a "piece of treachery, base and detestable" enough, one which, according to Butler, ought to have appeared so to every one, and yet it was regarded by Deborah as a noble and virtuous act, over every step and incident of which she gloats and exults. I am not blaming her, I only summon her into court that she may tell us what her opinion is of a certain "base and detestable piece of treachery." Butler does not say that when men have been taught and trained they approve or disapprove particular dispositions and actions, he asserts broadly and universally that they do so, and he selects pieces of treachery as the sort of actions that "appear base and detestable to every one"; and yet here

are two leading women of an age, the one of whom betrays and slays in cold blood, and the other, in the most glowing and devotional language, extols the deed. Butler's allegation is, that things "appear" in a certain aspect, which is exactly what they do not. Doubtless Deborah had in her mind an abhorrence of something she called treachery, and the treacherous act by which her enemy was destroyed she contemplated under another name; but acts don't change their nature to suit the names men happen to give them. If treachery is hateful, here it was full blown, and yet it awakened no note of disapprobation. Jabin could not have injured Israel more than the King of Prussia has injured France; besides, it is said that Israel was "sold" to Jabin for her sins. Now, a Frenchwoman who should avenge her country's wrongs by murdering Moltke or Bismark *à la Facl* would very properly be put to death with universal execration; and why this difference? treachery and murder are always the same,—base and detestable,—but at one time the Deborahs applaud them, and at another none can be found to justify them. It is not, therefore, as Butler puts it, that the acts in themselves, and at first sight, are approved or disapproved; it is the acts felt and appreciated in their results when the "reflection" he appeals to has had time and opportunity to do its work. For what is reflection but thought, occupied with actions in their multifarious relations and tendencies?

Mr. T. But then Butler immediately gives it another name, calling it "a principle" and "a judge"; it is hard to get any precise idea of a thing that is distinguished by so many and such different names.

Mr. L. What has a clear and unambiguous existence, known and ascertained, it is not difficult to mark by a definite name, but when there is indistinctness in the thought there is usually a corresponding vagueness in the language; to call the same thing, in the same sentence, reflection, a principle, and a judge, leaves it in a haze.

Mr. T. That men's minds work in the same way is a reason for giving to the operations a common name. Man reasons and reflects—but these processes have led to the most motley results, and except through certain primitive data no agreement can be arrived at. The verdict of mankind, therefore, as you say, though so often invoked, is in reality a myth, except in matters of the simplest sort,—those for instance to be determined by the senses, and where only one determination is possible. Men meet here upon an equality, their means and materials of judgment are about the same, and their conclusions vary but little. To Jael the external world was much what it is now; innumerable properties of it were hidden from her, but its great features,—above all, its externality, appeared to her as it appears to us. But can we put actions into the same category? do they appear in the same guise to different generations? Surely not. The actions, however, are not altered; it is the way of looking at them that has undergone a change, and we ask, what has wrought the change? Why, as the lawyers say, do men approbate what they afterwards reprobate? Why, unless they have found out what at first did not “appear”; and if a thing does possess latent properties that are bad, is it unlikely that at some time they will “appear”? And the bad property, inherent in bad actions, as we infer, is their injuriousness to man, individually, socially, or politically.

Mr. L. This seems to be the abiding characteristic, and it is one that sooner or later will make itself felt. Actions may for a long time pass under false names and colours, but as they work after their kind—doing good or harm—one day or other their quality is revealed; men's opinions of them, as we see, undergo a change, because their experience of them is enlarged and corrected. External things *do* profoundly modify internal thoughts, and human character is what it is by the combined operation of the one upon the other; it is the friction of these two forces that brings out the new light which shines upon

man's life, and reveals latent deformity in many old things of good name.

Mr. T. We may not individually be better than our fathers, whatever that may mean, but certainly we know more, and can do more, and the accumulated wisdom of society is greater, and its conclusions are truer and surer, standing upon a larger base of experience; and experience is not less available for actions than for other phenomena. Nature has deceived man as actions have deceived him, and the instrument that rectifies the one and the other is the same. At first, and in all things, he sees "through a glass darkly," by-and-by more clearly; and it is impossible to believe as regards the human race that there is any arrest of this progress. The individual in his lifetime may gain but little, the generations acquire much; and while experience shall continue to teach and human intellect has faculty to learn, there can be no pause. The vocabulary of man's "dispositions and actions" may remain steadfast, but the meaning of the words fluctuate; new knowledge and feeling may find expression in the old forms, the new wine may be put into the old bottles, but as the old things pass away, the unchanged abstracts will be derived from varying concretes. As Browning says;

"Man must pass from old to new,
From vain to real, from mistake to fact,
From what once seemed good to what now proves best."*

"What once seemed good" has got put into another category, and now seems "base and detestable"; the change is subjective not objective. What "every one" may think respecting particular acts a thousand years hence we cannot predicate, what they thought of them ten thousand years ago may be equally indeterminate; and so Butler's proposition—prospective and retrospective, and universal as it is—collapses.

* A Death in the Desert.

Mr. L. It needs qualification if it is to square with the history of the world. We quoted Macbeth just now, and one cannot help remarking how anxiously he weighed and measured the results of the crime he was contemplating.

“ If the assassination
 Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
 With his surcease, success ; that but this blow
 Might be the be-all and the end-all here ;
 But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
 We'd jump the life to come.”

Macbeth is ready to jump the life to come, but he has a firm conviction that he cannot “trammel up the consequence—here—upon this bank and shoal of time.” He has no notion that “such a piece of injustice, and violence, and treachery, may not be faulty or vicious at all, if the whole foreseen inconvenience likely to be brought upon others is less than the advantage procured to himself. Macbeth was well aware that the act he had in view would produce fruit internal and external, which he was in dread of. There was nothing else that held back his hand ; if “this blow” might be the be-all and the end-all, it would be struck without hesitation. It was the consequences that made him pause. He knew there were evil results to be encountered, and he quailed before them. It was not artificial laws that he was afraid of, but the down-right pain and danger that followed such wrong-doing.

Mr. T. If an ordinary observer were treating of Macbeth's career it might be represented that his treachery was successful, that he obtained the crown and the power for which he plotted, and was an example of prosperous villainy ; but Shakespeare lets us into his secrets, and shows how soon his worst anticipations were realised. He speaks of “terrible dreams that shake him nightly” ; and he exclaims—

“ Better be with the dead
Whom we, to gain our place, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie.
In restless ecstasy.”

And then—

“ Oh, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife ! ”

And at last the confession is wrung from him,

“ I’m sick at heart—
I have lived long enough ; my way of life
Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf ;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have ; but in their stead,
Curses not loud, but deep.”

The things he had lost were honour, love, obedience, troops of friends, and he had got in exchange “ curses not loud, but deep,” “ torture,” “ terrible dreams,” and “ scorpions.”

Mr. L. When Macbeth paused on the brink of the precipice, and allowed his better nature for a moment to sway him, it was his relations with Duncan that furnished the restraining motives,—no abstract considerations, but certain concrete facts.

“ He’s here in double trust :
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed : then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door—
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off.”

It may not be a very noble kind of virtue that Macbeth displays in this soliloquy, but, at a certain point of moral progress these are perhaps the only incentives that

operate, and when they have done their work they give place to others that are worthier.

“ I hold it truth with him who sings
To one clear harp, in diverse tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.” *

And if men—then mankind ; the “ dead selves ” are the inferior motives and dispositions which may have been for a while the only influential ones ; the “ higher things ” are the products of better training and culture, of a truer estimate of human life, of a more genuine sympathy, and of more real regard for the rights and feelings of others ; at every stage irritation and selfish passions may be allayed, and more reasonable and healthy satisfaction acquired ; and the progress of the individual is a type of that which marks the species. This is simple matter of observation, but when applied to the growth of moral sentiment in the human race something more mysterious is sought for, and plain matter-of-fact is not reckoned sufficient.

Mr. T. It was Macbeth’s conscience that made this misery for him. He had violated the laws of God and man, and suffered the pangs of remorse.

Mr. L. The laws of God and man are enacted for some reason ; they either suit man’s condition or they are supposed to do so. Man’s law-making is often enough radical blundering, and yet the infringement of it may be the cause of pain ; much more must the breach of laws, having a real foundation in things, produce pain. Man’s law Macbeth did not care for, and God’s law he was ready deliberately to defy, and “ jump the life to come.” Law, except that of things maintained by force, he set at naught, and he dared even that for the sake of

* In Memoriam.

some present good. But as black will not be made into white, nor two and two into five, neither will actions produce pleasant consequences which nature has made to yield painful ones ; and Macbeth's actions of this sort did in due time produce the harvest that was proper to them. The best laws are the interpreters of nature's intentions, and nature holds in her own hand the rewards and penalties, "whether we hear, or whether we forbear."

Mr. T. Butler points out another fact which is often overlooked. He says—"If the pain which we feel upon doing what tends to the destruction of our bodies, suppose upon too near approaches to fire, or upon wounding ourselves, be appointed by the Author of Nature to prevent our doing what thus tends to our destruction,—this is altogether as much an instance of his punishing our actions, and consequently of our being under his government, as declaring by a voice from heaven that if we acted so he would inflict such pain upon us, and inflicting it whether it be greater or less."*

Mr. L. Postulating with Butler an Author of Nature, we cannot escape his conclusions. A voice from Heaven, as a method of communication, seems more authoritative and clear ; but as it must be conveyed by words, which are fluctuating and unstable, the evidence of things, where it can be obtained, is less open to dispute. That actions do harm is unequivocal evidence of their being evil in some sort, and words can hardly make it plainer. The intentions and design of the author of nature are to be made out by what he *does* as well as by what he *says*, for in either case the meaning has to be sought out and construed, and where there is an apparent conflict, facts may be more intelligible than words.

"Conjecture of the worker by the work."†

Mr. T. Butler's argument is a very sweeping one.

* Analogy, Part I. chap. ii.

† The Ring and the Book.

He says—"Vain is the ridicule with which one foresees some persons will divert themselves upon finding lesser pains considered as instances of Divine punishment. There is no possibility of answering or evading the general thing here intended without denying all final causes. For final causes being admitted, the pleasures and pains now mentioned must be admitted too, as instances of them. And if they are, if God annexes delight to some actions and uneasiness to others, with an apparent design to induce us to act so and so, then he not only dispenses happiness and misery, but also rewards and punishes actions."*

Mr. L. Inducing us to act by pleasure and pain is just what I contend for, with this addition, that the uneasiness or delight (to use Butler's words) annexed to actions is an inherent property of them, in relation to a creature having the attributes and the surroundings of man. The pain and pleasure are not accidents, just as it is not an accident that fire burns; and if its burning us when we come into contact with it is notice to us not to do so, then if Butler's reasoning be true, other pain is of similar import; and an action, the product of which, soon or late, is preponderant pain, must be in a normal state of things unmistakably evil.

Mr. T. Not, of course, necessarily wrong, in a moral sense.

Mr. L. No; just as it may not be morally wrong to go too near the fire, although if you do so, you are, as Butler puts it, punished by being burnt. Butler in this case gives the word punish an enlarged signification. It is not a word easy to define, but if it is made to include all sorts of pain, it must modify some current opinions very considerably.

Mr. T. The law of things, as you call it, in relation to actions, is difficult to discover, although it may be as

* Analogy, Part I. chap. ii.

certain as the law of fire ; but it is not so apparent nor so urgent.

“ Break fire's law,
Sin against rain, although the penalty
Be just a singe or soaking ? No, he smiles ;
Those laws are laws that can enforce themselves.” *

Mr. L. If the laws of our moral nature are laws at all, if they are determined by the constitution of man and the world, then the law of fire may be more patent and prompt, but the others will be not less sure. They may seem to fail and to be evaded, but our observation may be at fault, or we may have discriminated erroneously.

Mr. T. The results of mere carelessness are sometimes as hurtful as the worst kind of wrong-doing, and although there may be sorrow for it, there may not be that kind of pain which we call remorse, and which is the peculiar concomitant of what is accounted guilt.

Mr. L. There is this distinction undoubtedly ; ignorance and negligence are hardly less mischievous than direct evil-doing. Mankind visit with greater disapprobation the one set of acts than the other, and rightly so ; a disposition to do harm, an intention to injure, has in it more evil consequences than the mere errors and mistakes.

Mr. T. Practical and intellectual blunders may sometimes produce as much misery as is the product of crime. A man who, by miscalculation, causes the loss of a ship and crew, does as much harm as he who should wilfully sink the same ship ; but the disposition to do harm is absent in the one case, and this is all the difference ; the experience of mankind has taught them that the design or determination to do harm is more injurious than mere negligence, and on this account it is visited with more pain and disapprobation. If the factors of moral arithmetic are subtle and hard to fix, the general results are

* Robert Browning, Bishop Blougram's Apology.

so clear that we may predicate special effects without any great uncertainty. Evil flows from carelessness, and from ill design, and occasionally the directly hurtful consequences of the first may be more than of the second; but upon the whole this is reversed. Man also puts his weight into the scale against wrong, and the penalty and the fear go to make up a total of pain on the side of moral wrong which is not to be mistaken.

Mr. L. From the first, men find some things pleasant and others injurious. Those are called good, and these evil. By-and-by these notions come respectively under the dominion of authority, and codes of law and of morals are called into existence, and fluctuate as the real character of actions is more clearly ascertained. It is incredible that an intuitive perception should report so variously of the phenomena with which it had to deal; but postulating the faculties and feelings of men, the necessities of their existence, the circumstances of their habitation, and the results are consistent and comprehensible. If I refer again to the Bible it is not dogmatically, but to remind you of a phrase which expresses our view with great precision. In the 5th chapter of Hebrews persons of "full age" are said to be "those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." This language implies all we require. The "senses" are the various percipient powers of man. By "use" and "exercise" they discern or discriminate both "good and evil"—not by intuition, but by "use," which is "experience"; and the verdict of experience is determined by the consequences which have been observed to flow from actions. Those not of "full age" are easily deceived; and the human race in its infancy, before its senses had been duly exercised or its experiences carefully checked and compared, was misled in its moral reckoning, and has been ever since correcting or attempting to correct its judgments.

Mr. T. Assuming that government is a natural and

necessary complement of society, which is mainly employed in restricting individual action as hurtful to the community, it will undoubtedly give force and intensity to notions of right and wrong in general; it is in fact the great authority for constituting things right or wrong which were thought to be indifferent, and in this way it must have had an immense influence in creating a sense of obligation.

Mr. L. It is not possible to say how much a people's notions of right and wrong have been directly and indirectly derived from the fact that they have been moulded by the heavy and coercive power of government; that governments have always acted for the good of the governed is unfortunately not true, but that they have in some sort meant to do good by their laws is hardly to be doubted; but the good aimed at has often resulted in positive injury. To legislate for the good of all was too large a problem to be entertained in early times. What was due to man as a sentient being—duty—was not (and perhaps is not now) understood.

“Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,

And the thoughts of men are widen'd by the process of the suns.”*

The one object of government should be to make the condition of human life more agreeable, and in what other way can government justify the restraints it enjoins except by proving that in some manner they promote, or are believed to promote, the good of the governed? Richard Hooker, whom all the world have agreed to call “the judicious,” in the 8th book of his *Ecclesiastical Polity*, lays down this proposition—“The end whereunto all government was instituted was *bonum publicum*, the universal or common good.” This dictum of Hooker did little to influence the affairs of the world for many years, and when Bentham resuscitated it in his celebrated formula of “the greatest happiness of the greatest

* Tennyson.

number," it was looked upon with as much curiosity and surprise as Rip Van Winkle, when he descended into his native village after his twenty years' slumber among the Katskill Mountains. But whether government should aim at anything less than the good of the governed is not now a debateable question;—all our legislation is, theoretically at least, referred to this standard, so that what is right in law may be in its operation good—to the utmost possible limit; and if this be the highest ideal of law making, if laws are to be judged "by their fruits," can we conceive any other standard to which actions lying beyond the reach of human laws can be more appropriately conformed?

Mr. T. If, in his legislative capacity, man can frame no worthier purpose than to promote the happiness of the commonwealth, is there any higher object than happiness to be obtained in his social and individual sphere? That is your question, and I must say I think not. Looked at in this light, happiness would involve the harmonious working of all the internal and external machinery within and around us, and what more can be accomplished? By ignorance and by passion it may be marred, but it looks more like an ultimate test than anything else. If it could be known beforehand what actions would in all cases infallibly produce the largest amount of well-being, might we not with certainty pronounce them to be right?

Mr. L. So far as we are acquainted with the physical laws of the world they are uniform and constant in their operation. Is there any reason to believe that there are in the universe moral laws, or that they are less strict and unbending than physical ones? Moral laws are the laws of man's life and conduct. Is it conceivable that they are without order and design? and what design is more palpable and obvious than that of making them conduce to the happiness of rational agents, and that the obligation to obey them should be the pain which the

breach of them sooner or later involves? But then this is not the whole account of the matter. It is the raw material out of which whatever relates to human action is fashioned, but the passions and emotions, the imagination and the reason, oftentimes give to things forms and colours which are as unlike the original in appearance as the roots of a tree are to the leaves and flowers and fruit, from which their beauty and nourishment are derived. The most disinterested action that can be performed, the one that is externally the least self regarding, contributes to the performer's happiness, and would not otherwise get performed. It is the characteristic of such actions to yield satisfaction, the absence of which is painful; and pain is voluntarily endured only in the pursuit of some good which is thought to be more than commensurate. No profitless pain is, if possible, incurred. The circumstances of his life

“Enable man to wring, from out all pain
All pleasure, for a common heritage,
To all eternity.”*

Mr. T. Pain, as we have seen before, is the obvious result of wrong-doing, and you infer that there is no exception to this rule, though for a time it may be counteracted, and though we may not always be able to trace its operation or to explain its meaning. The correlative of error, and folly, and wrong, is pain, and this is the constitution of things.

Mr. L. We must of course acknowledge that all the pain existing in the world is not to be traced to the personal wrong-doing, moral, intellectual, or physical, of the sufferer. It must, however, be reckoned a means of teaching and reformation, and whatever has no purpose beyond mere hurting and harming is to be regarded as cruelty; but pain is a special product of the wrong-doing, not something added to it afterwards. As Butler says—

* The Ring and the Book.

“Whether the pleasure or pain which thus follows upon our behaviour be owing to the Author of Nature’s acting upon us every moment which we feel it, or to his having at once contrived and executed his own part in the plan of the world, makes no alteration as to the matter before us. For if civil magistrates could make the sanction of their laws take place without interposing at all after they had passed them, without a trial, and the formalities of an execution; if they were able to make their laws execute themselves, or every offender to execute them upon himself, we should be just in the same sense under their government then as we are now, but in a much higher degree and more perfect manner.”* Governments punish actions exclusively as detrimental to society. Acts are legally wrong because they are politically or socially assumed to be injurious. What may be called moral law gives notice to intelligent agents, by painful consequences, that actions are wrong. They prove themselves to be wrong and out of harmony with the constitution of things by producing pain. The pain is the evidence of their obliquity; and if we cannot trace the connection in all cases, we have proof enough to justify the general conclusion that pain and wrong are two phases of the same fact.

Mr. T. It is not by personal acts alone that man makes acquaintance with pain; he derives good from those who have gone before him, and he inherits evil, but it was never uncaused, though its genesis be not discoverable; it may have been transmitted—his ancestors laboured and he entered into their labours; they transgressed, and he was born blind (John ix. 2), physically, morally, or mentally.

Mr. L. The constitution of things links man indissolubly, for better or worse, with what has gone before and what comes after, and though this may perplex us

* Analogy, Part I. chap. ii.

in the analysis of individual fate, we assume it is an arrangement that will eventually justify itself by a preponderance of good; it foils us in attempting to mete out to individuals their exact share of blame-worthiness, and it should therefore moderate our censoriousness both in matters of belief and practice.

“Then at the balance let’s be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What’s done we partly may compute,
But know not what’s resisted.”*

Mr. T. Look at it as we may, this aspect of things is perplexing; the bonds that bind us to the past are not to be broken, and the burden laid upon us must be borne, hard and heavy though it be; the compensations which it brings we take as matters of course, but in particular cases the pressure is terrible, though to the race eventually there may be a balance of good. Shelley looked at the dark side of the problem: he says,

“What power delights to torture us? I know
That to myself I do not wholly owe
What now I suffer, though in part I may.
Alas! none strewed fresh flowers upon the way
Where wandering heedlessly, I met pale Pain,
My shadow, which will leave me not again.”†

Mr. L. We are not to take for granted that men have as yet interpreted truly what is involved in this question, nor yet that they have put such real knowledge as they possess into transparent words.

Mr. T. This is the stumbling-block we are constantly met by; what is the precise meaning in morals of the words made use of? What was the meaning attached to them in past times? We say a man is selfish, and we know in general what is meant by it; but then systems of ethics are designated by the same word, though they may do no more than apply the maxim of doing to others

* Burns.

† Julian and Maddalo.

as we would they should do to us, and this is a computation not reckoned selfish in the ordinary sense of the word.

Mr. L. Hume says—"In my opinion there are two things which have led astray those philosophers that have insisted so much on the selfishness of man. They found that every act of virtue or friendship was attended with a secret pleasure, whence they concluded that friendship and virtue could not be disinterested. But the fallacy of this is obvious. The virtuous sentiment or passion produces the pleasure, and does not arise from it. I feel a pleasure in doing good to my friend because I love him; but do not love him for the sake of that pleasure."* "Disinterested" and "selfish," are words, the meaning of which we fancy ourselves perfectly acquainted with, but when we ask what are the precise facts they represent we don't find it easy to determine. A recent writer on this subject says—"When we consider how far the development of knowledge depends upon full and exact means of expressing thought, is it not a pregnant consideration that the language of civilised men is but the language of savages more or less improved in structure, a good deal extended in vocabulary, made more precise in the dictionary definition of words? The development of language between its savage and cultured stages has been made in its details, scarcely in its principle. It is not too much to say that half the vast defect of language as a method of utterance, and half the vast defect of thought as determined by the influence of language, are due to the fact that speech is a scheme worked out by the rough and ready application of material metaphor and imperfect analogy, in ways fitting rather the barbaric education of those who formed it than our own. Language is one of those intellectual departments in which we have gone too little beyond the savage state, but are still, as it were, hacking with stone

* Hume's Essays—"Dignity or Meanness of Human Nature."

celts, and twirling laborious friction fire. Ethnography reasonably accounts at once for the immense power and the manifest weakness of language as a means of expressing modern educated thought, by treating it as an original product of low culture, gradually adapted by ages of evolution and selection to answer more or less sufficiently the requirements of modern civilisation."*

Mr. T. The things and thoughts that we name must have existed before they could be named, and the names they received represented such appearance as the things put on; but a name which has been long associated with an idea imposes a special meaning upon it, and if the meaning was at the first a misconception, it may remain uncorrected for many generations, and, though the ideas of men may gradually be modified, the yoke of the words is hard to throw off.

Mr. L. The names by which men have distinguished actions have too often been egregiously false and misleading, popular objects of admiration have appropriated to themselves epithets of which they were wholly undeserving, and it has needed all the force of reason to correct the fallacious impression. In our own commercial age actions of the most flagrant dishonesty are called by conventional words which imply misfortune rather than fraud, and the most shameful actions escape the moral indignation which they merit. The man who cannot pay his debts by reason of extravagance and speculation looks with disdain upon the man who fails to pay in consequence of gambling upon the turf, though the former may do most mischief; a man who purloins some trifling article is a degraded thief, and expiates his offence in a gaol, whilst the one who appropriates in a wholesale way the property and earnings of others makes what is called a composition, frequents a church, and holds himself as high as ever. If society made a righteous estimate of

* Edward B. Tylor, "Primitive Culture."

actions, and judged of them according to the mischief they entailed, these men might change places; but the respectable man who has robbed his creditors of thousands would feel grossly humiliated if he had to share the cell of the miserable wretch who stole half-a-crown.

Mr. T. The very word that distinguishes the system of morals we have been discussing is a source of prejudice. Utilitarianism is a word which, when fairly interpreted, is altogether irreproachable, but it has been associated with what is "common and unclean," until it is difficult to introduce it to better society. To love one's neighbour as one's self is reckoned a good rule, and yet by a change of words it gets the bad name of selfishness. The darkest deeds of the Inquisition were clothed in venerable and devout phrases, and this pious and plausible language imparted such a flavour to the bad work that its perpetrators probably thought it was good.

Mr. L. If unctuous words disguise evil deeds, printed words, with their hard and fast lines, take altered impressions very slowly; the new wine of a fresh experience is poured into the old bottle of an ancient word, and so the new wine acquires the flavour of the old bottle.

Mr. T. Need we then wonder that the old ideas retain their dominion?

Mr. L. Nor should we repine, so long as the new are put on their trial. That man does move forward we admit, though at a rate and after a fashion baffling our computation, especially as estimated by the old chronologies. Geology, however, has furnished better data and more authentic evidence. The strata of the earth bear witness to the enormous periods of time that were necessary for the production of the phenomena they disclose; and the mind, proceeding by inferences which are elsewhere valid and irresistible, confides in its interpretation of the facts as firmly as in its reading of inscriptions upon pillars or upon parchment. The detail

of events which human eyes did not see, and which imagination only has depicted, can never become truly intelligible or conceivable by the instrumentality of mere words, but may be in some degree comprehended by means of what is tangible and visible; a history of the earth is written in the strata of the earth, and brings new light to the history of man. A finite intelligence, looking at our world in its molten state, revolving for ages in its desolate path, could never have dreamed that "this fiery mass" would one day be adorned with the loveliness and beauty that have since dwelt upon it, nor have conjectured that the "fervent heat" which rendered it uninhabitable, was but a phase of that evolution which was fitting it for the abode of living beings. We are beginning to see that the little drama comprised within the few and limited acts recorded in our annals, represents but a very small portion of the performance, and of the stage on which man has hitherto played his part. That he sprang from a low origin, at a remote era, may be granted without fear. Fill up the interval as we may,—within the periods of authentic written history (and why should hard, legible, ineffaceable facts be incredible?)—it is evident that he has made vast acquisitions, and the space that now separates the most advanced from the most degraded of our species may be no greater than that which separates the lowest living races from the lowest that science has brought to light, and the relations of these earliest specimens of our race, founded upon their wants and impulses, must have borne a certain resemblance to those of their more civilised successors; their morality also must have moved upon a parallel line, for it must have consisted in the adjustment of inner relations to external circumstances. Man—"the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time,"—is poorly represented in the person of his very remote ancestor; and what he has become now, why should not the lowliest become in the future? and why should not this relative

position of the first and the last be maintained, so that the noblest of our era may be the lowest of the "coming race"?

Mr. T. But what are the causes of these civilising effects? They are not accidents, but must be due to the efforts and opportunities that have achieved them. Of races, it is true that "whosoever hath, to him shall be given . . . but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away that he hath;" the aborigines, who have not, perish; and the race which has qualities and aptitudes that are good and useful survives and transmits them, and if definite moral ideas are not inherited, the experiences of the past get organised, and make new and higher attainments perpetually possible. Locke's comparison of the mind to a blank sheet of paper is not altogether a happy one; ages of contact with nature and human nature have bequeathed to it—not the torpidity of paper—but products of thought and feeling, which assimilate with an ever-increasing facility the more elevated conditions of its existence.

" A footfall there
Suffices to upturn to the warm air
Half-germinating spices; mere decay
Produces richer life." *

Mr. L. Man's ideas and feelings are mainly the reflection of his circumstances and surroundings. If the internal forces of nature had not broken up the surface of the earth into mountains and plains, and if the effects of light and shade had been other than they are, his notions of beauty would have been of a different order; what he possesses is the product of his relationships, and would be altered with them.

" How hard it is to hide the sparks of nature!
These boys know little they are sons to the King;
Nor Cymbeline dreams they are alive.
They think they're mine; and though trained up thus meanly

* Sordello.

I' the cave wherein they bow, their thoughts do hit
 The roofs of palaces; and nature prompts them,
 In simple and low things, to prync it much
 Beyond the trick of others." *

Hitting the roofs of palaces is just a special instance of that transmitted feeling of which man's general habitudes are a wider if less observed illustration. "The sparks of nature" had been struck out by the collision of natural objects; "these boys know little," and were "trained meanly," but their impulsive acting bore witness to former culture; direct consciousness of it there was not, and no imitation, but withal a distinct bias, vocal and visible; effects which nature everywhere slowly accumulates, or as you say, organises. To the stature of the generation they may add, not a cubit, but an infinitesimal part of one, for things which nature approves do acquire ascendancy; the conditions of life favour their growth, and they grow and are indefinitely modified in their progress. Causes, apparently insignificant and of almost imperceptible action, by incessant and combined operation accomplish the results; tendencies beneficial to the world, though at first feeble and vacillating, gather to themselves power and persistence, and vanquish opposition; and the impulse they give does not spend itself in the generation that originates them, but is carried forward and consolidated, until in its turn it encounters some fresh force into which it is merged. This fact then meets us,—that it is conduct, intelligently directed, which gets a final foothold in the world of affairs—that habit may prompt it, without consciousness, and that habit may be of inheritance; and the credentials of conduct which are alone to be trusted are its effects in the world,—happiness and well-being,—“on earth peace, good will toward men.”

Mr. T. To blunt the edge of Mr. Lecky's criticism let us put in Hooker's definition of the word happiness,

* *Cymbeline.*

he says,—“Happiness, therefore, is that estate whereby we attain, so far as possibly may be attained, the full possession of that which simply for itself is to be desired, and containeth in it, after an eminent sort, the contentation of our desires, the highest degree of all our perfections.”*

Mr. L. If Mr. Lecky had studied this definition he need not have quarrelled with the word; to human nature certain things are always desirable, and certain other things may become desirable, and in this direction there is no limit, so long as the things are, by the constitution of the world, adapted to the nature of man and are brought to his knowledge.

Mr. T. What is ideally conceivable may be practically unattainable; our subject is man, with his powers and the objects provided for them; he is only capable of such knowledge as he has instruments for, and of such happiness as his faculties furnish. He cannot transcend these; if there are in other worlds means of happiness or notions of rectitude which are not related to his nature, they are to him non-existent. He can but know by the faculties he possesses, and he can but act within the limits of his function.

Mr. L. And if he pleases he may kick against the pricks, and produce to himself inevitable pain.

Mr. T. Kicking against pricks, voluntarily or involuntarily, yields small returns in the shape of right feeling and thinking.

Mr. L. Don't forget the geological eras; and don't circumscribe your ideas within the narrow centuries of which we have written records; build theories upon facts. At present none may furnish us with an unassailable scheme of the universe, nor is it necessary we should have one, and it even is more needful that we should not fashion one out of discordant materials. We can wait,—

* Ecclesiastical Polity, Book I. ch. xi.

we have seen a cosmogony founded on words displaced by another founded on things; perhaps it is inevitable that such words should be misunderstood until facts throw light upon them, and the fate of these words should warn us how treacherous a foundation words are, when the things which they stand for are unknown. Remember the rudimentary intelligence and lowly condition of the primitive man whose flint tools we have handled, and compare with them the tools and books of his descendant. "Look on that picture, and on this," and say if the suffering has been wasted that has achieved the transformation?

"Life is probation, and this earth no goal
But starting-point of man; compel him strive,
Which means in man, as good as reach the goal,—
Why institute that race, his life, at all?"*

Mr. T. (reads). "The basis of our conception of duty is an intuitive perception that among the various feelings, tendencies, and impulses that constitute our emotional being, there are some which are essentially good and ought to be encouraged, and some which are essentially bad and ought to be repressed."

Mr. L. Whose conception does Mr. Lecky mean, when he says "ours"? For to say that he has such a conception, which he thinks to be intuitive, is not at all the question. An "intuitive perception" should be the property of all mankind who are not diseased or crazy. Let us hear Butler on this point. He says, "Human nature is not one simple, uniform thing, but a composition of various parts—body, spirit, appetites, particular passions and affections, for each of which reasonable self-love would lead men to have due regard, and make suitable provision." † Again, "Men may speak of the degeneracy and corruption of the world, according to the experience they have had of it;

* *The Ring and the Book.*

† Sermon upon "The Love of Our Neighbour."

but human nature, considered as the divine workmanship, should methinks be treated as sacred, for *in the image of God made He man*. That passion from whence men take occasion to run into the dreadful vices of malice and revenge—even that passion, as implanted in our nature by God, is not only innocent but a generous movement of the mind.* And in the same sermon he says, “No passion God hath endued us with can be in itself evil.” A much truer philosophy this than Mr. Lecky’s; “our emotional nature,” what Butler calls passion, Mr. Lecky asserts is in part “essentially bad,” and known to be so by an “intuitive perception.” Strange that the same “intuitive perception” did not discover that it was “essentially bad” to slay men and animals for amusement, and to commit other prodigious atrocities.

Mr. T. (reads). “It is not to be expected, and it is not maintained, that men in all ages should have agreed about the application of their moral principles. All that is contended for is. that these principles are themselves the same.”

Mr. L. Whether men “should have agreed” or not, is a question we have no means of determining. No valid expectation could be formed one way or other apart from experience, and yet if one knew that men possessed some “intuitive perception,” one would expect them to be aware of it, and to be in tolerable agreement about it; if innate and acquired knowledge be open to equal doubt, what advantage has one over the other? Facts are facts, however we become acquainted with them; but that which is innate should surely be self-evident, or carry with it the highest certainty. Mr. Lecky says it is in “the application of their moral principles that men have not agreed, but that these principles are themselves the same.” What does this mean? that somewhere “beyond this visible diurnal sphere” there are moral principles

* Sermon upon “Resentment.”

applicable to human affairs other than those known to men? or that the human race everywhere and at all times have been in possession of the same moral principles? The first proposition is not germane to the discussion, and the second is contradicted by facts. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" is a moral principle, plain and perspicuous, but it formed no part of the ethical code of the world for many ages, and how could men "apply" it until they were acquainted with it? When the moral judgments of one age differ from those of another, we conclude that the moral principles which direct them are not the same. But, says Mr. Lecky, humanity was always reckoned as a virtue and cruelty as a vice; and how does this help the matter? for if "humanity" ever tolerated and approved the butchering of one human being to make a holiday for another human being, then the word humanity at one time included as part of its meaning what it excluded at another, and it is a transparent fallacy to treat it as always comprehending the same things. The word may be the same, but the thing or conception it has stood for has been fluctuating and unstable; what men mean by it we gather from their acts and their reasonings; one generation speaks of the habitable world, and means some very narrow district; another, by the same word, designates the real globe,—and many of Mr. Lecky's words are equally indeterminate and elastic. If men have thought it a good, and pious, and possible thing to propitiate their gods by human sacrifices, we conclude that their moral principles were utterly at fault in the primary conception of what is good; if, under the sanction of law or custom, or superstition, they performed acts that were cruel and hurtful, we unhesitatingly denounce the acts, guided by the law and constitution of things as made known by experience; we may excuse the offender, but not the offence. Nature, however, is more stern and relentless for those who violate her ordinances,—"treasure up wrath against the day of wrath" (Romans

ii. 5); or, in other words, accumulate the bad consequences of their acts. Things take their course, "whether men hear, or whether they forbear" (Ezek. ii. 5). They don't produce pleasant fruits because men give them pleasant names, or because the real character and tendency of them are mistaken; man's position is much the same practically, whether he is ignorant of principles or of their application. Whether a mariner has a compass or not matters little, if he can neither read its indications nor apply them. Put a man into possession of the moral principle, "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and he immediately asks, "and who is my neighbour?" and he must be informed either by authority, or by reason and experience. A Roman, taking his holiday at the arena, did not regard his victims as neighbours whom he should love, but as things made for his gratification; and what sort of moral principles could co-exist with such a notion? The Roman poet who affected to be interested in whatever belonged to man, uttered a sentiment that had no actual relation to living men and women.

Mr. Lecky, indeed, asserts that killing men for amusement was not a crime in a Roman (page 114). If it were not, crimes have been very scarce in the annals of the world. If it be true that a Roman by such an act committed no crime against the laws of his country, against human nature a great crime was committed, which was amply and sternly avenged; if such acts are not crimes why do they produce the fruits of crime? and why does mankind of the "milder day" adjudge it a just and needful retribution when "Goths glut their ire" upon the profligate and base population who found pleasure in the degradation and anguish of their species?

Mr. T. A crime is technically an act injurious to the community; but its criminality is its injuriousness, and not its position on the statute book. It is strange that Mr. Lecky should deny the criminality of acts that distinctly debase and brutalise mankind; whatever does

this, in the strictest sense of the word, is a crime, and will eventually be so recognised. We shall make no acts injurious by declaring them to be so, and we shall make none innoxious by apology or applause; consequences are not to be evaded because they are not apprehended. I suppose that filth generates fever whether men know it or not, and acts that deteriorate man's moral nature as certainly produce their proper fruit; "*whatsoever* a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7). Is this matter of fact or mere dogma? "Sowing the wind, and reaping the whirlwind" (Hos. viii. 7), is not a concatenation, uncertain and capricious, but fixed and determinate, though it should need long experience to make it out.

Mr. L. Man's relations are real and substantial things, not to be thwarted or perverted with impunity; he may mistake or misinterpret them,—he may regard as insignificant what is really momentous, or he may elevate into importance what is trivial, but the course and current of things is not altered by his estimate, and his condition bears witness to the truth or error of his computation. If he worships idols either of the mind or of wood, his circumstances tell of the delusion, for nature is not mocked or deceived, she is not imposed upon by lies or shams, but appoints to each its appropriate penalty, and exacts it punctually.

Mr. T. And yet men manage to live under the falsest notions of things.

Mr. L. And they live badly enough, and are hurt incessantly without knowing how or why.

Mr. T. Being under the dominion of laws which they are ignorant of, but which are inexorable in their operation.

Mr. L. They cannot evade the physical suffering that is the result of physical ignorance. Evil of this kind may be disguised, but it does not become good by assuming its garb, nor is moral evil at all more accommodating; its nature is to do harm, and it does it. The moral atmosphere of the Roman amphitheatre was no less

pestilential than the exhalations of the Pontine marshes, and Mr. Lecky would hardly contend that these were harmless because men might think them so; their influences might elude observation, but they made themselves felt.

Mr. T. The subjective impressions of men are not tests of truth. What they think may be material to their own happiness, but has no effect upon the arrangement of things; and right and wrong are surely attributes of things founded upon their relations to man, but quite independent of his notions of them.

Mr. L. If actions that do moral mischief in the world are not crimes we shall want another name of equally bad repute to designate them, and we shall gain nothing by the change. Whatever does harm in the world will some time or other get abolished, if the means exist; what was said about it "by them of old time" (Matt. v. 21), will be gainsaid by those who come after. The history of the Jews illustrates the fact. A people at a low point of civilisation had, in many things, a low moral standard to work by, "because of the hardness of their hearts" (Matt. xix. 8). It was not a question of applying moral principles, but of not possessing them; and the evil tolerated was evil notwithstanding, though the people were not conscious of it.

Mr. T. The mind of the race, regarded historically, has manifestly been more conscious of evil at one time than at another, and maxims and rules have been synchronically made to suit it. Measured by an ideal standard, or by man at his best, these have been bad, and the evil was not an abstraction but a disorganisation, asking compassion, not approbation; and the thing asking compassion was the state of mind that so imperfectly apprehended its relations, and consequently endured so much misfortune; but the experience that sufficed to rectify what had grown complex was competent from the first to teach what was simple.

Mr. L. Mr. Lecky tells us "The terms 'higher and lower,' 'nobler or less noble,' 'purer or less pure,' represent moral facts with much greater fidelity than right or wrong, or virtue or vice" (page 113). They represent something to those who have a standard, but then which of all the standards are we to try them by? Nobler than what? Whose ideal shall we set up? A Jewish Pharisee's or a Roman Stoic's, a North American Indian's or a Hindoo's, that of Thomas a' Kempis or Thomas Huxley, Tamerlane's or Tam o' Shanter's?

"Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them?"

was the question that perplexed Hamlet, and has much puzzled many more. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received with readiness of mind, and searched," &c. (Acts xvii. 11); but to the majority of the Jews this disposition was not noble; on the contrary, they thought badly of it, and gave it a bad name. We must not be cozened with mere words, it is for some reason that acts are called noble and pure, and the reasons vary. The patriarchs were not pure after the pattern of the Puritans. "It hath been said, thou shalt hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, love your enemies" (Matt. v. 43—44); love and hate, therefore, have each been reckoned noble, and there are tribes of men now who think it both a folly and a crime to love or spare an enemy.

"Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate;
Shun what I follow; slight what I receive:
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me; we all surmise,—
They, this thing, and I that; whom shall my soul believe?"*

Mr. T. The word noble gives us no more help than

* Rabbi Ben Ezra.

other words of the same class, for the conceptions it has held together have been composed of discordant elements.

“What a piece of work is man!
How noble in reason?”

But this nobleness of reason has not been universally acknowledged, the superstitious have denied it, and the fighters have derided it;

“Nay, if we talk of reason
Let's shut our gates and sleep; manhood and honour
Should have hare-hearts, would they but fat their thoughts
With this cramm'd reason; reason and respect
Make livers pale and lustihood deject.”*

The admiration implied by the word noble has not been bestowed on any settled or righteous principle. The word has now a connotation that represents the culture of ages; to the man of flint implements it had little meaning.

Mr. L. “The light of human minds is perspicuous words,”† and the sort of words we are speaking of are not perspicuous, because the ideas they stand for have been unstable. The ideas are not the mintage of an intuition having immediate insight, but have corresponded to the condition of the world. Hero worship has set up strange gods, and the litanies it has made in their honour have spared no word of praise, but

“That spell upon the minds of men
Breaks, never to unite again,
That led them to adore
Those Pagod things of sabre sway,
With fronts of brass and feet of clay.”‡

Mr. T. The man of flint implements had this in common with his successor, that he was related to the world in which he lived, and to those by whom it was inhabited.

* Troilus and Cressida.

† Leviathan.

‡ Byron.

Mr. L. And these relations are the framework of man's morality; he is a son, a father, a subject, a created being, and each of these relations is a spring of action, shaping and governing his moral character. There is a channel of things in which his faculties and feelings are fitted to flow; he finds it out by observation and reflection, and it becomes known and assured to him by the fertility and beauty that mark its course.

Mr. T. His relations, being what they are, have correlative duties and obligations; the one set of things should be the counterpart of the other. A professor of moral philosophy at Oxford, eminent in his day, the Rev. W. Mills, B.D., opens a "Lecture on the Perception of Moral Beauty" in these words—"I have endeavoured to show, in my previous lectures, that the source and foundation of morality is in the immutable relations of things and persons to each other, and that the perception of it is placed in reason and intelligence." His published lectures accomplish this purpose imperfectly, but his definition, minus the word "immutable," seems a fair, if not a perspicuous one; the relation of things and persons being the data from whence are deduced duties and obligations which reason and intelligence approve, but "immutable" is a word not to be predicated of man.

Mr. L. Think of the ten commandments, or of any rule of right now regulating men's actions, as applied to Adam on the primal day of his existence; the "first commandment with promise" would have had no meaning to him. What could he covet? Against whom could he be a false witness? and so on through the decalogue. Relations and duties coincide; duties are what is due or owing on account of some relation.

Mr. T. Mr. Lecky affirms that "some savages kill their old parents" (page 104) from a feeling of kindness, and parents, we know, have "sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils" (Ps. cvi. 37), and Mr. Lecky makes a sort of apology for such acts, as having been

prompted by religious or economic ideas; we are not to suppose that these parents or children were worse than others—their actions were probably approved. There has at all times been a thing called cruelty, but sacrificing children to devils had another name amongst those who worshipped devils.

Mr. L. And such devils were regarded with respect and fear by their worshippers, and were to be propitiated by self-inflicted sufferings. Bad acts were done that imaginary supernatural beings might be appeased; and the acts were bad because they were stupid and degrading.

Mr. T. No acts can be reckoned good, how much soever they may be applauded, which are proved to be injurious to man.

Mr. L. Certainly not; the abstract word goodness, must derive its parentage from concrete acts that are productive of good; acts have been called good which were mischievous to man; they may have been done “ignorantly, in unbelief,” or misbelief, but this doesn’t change the nature of acts—“by their fruits ye shall know them.”

Mr. T. Our morning’s talk has shown us how wide of each other have been men’s thoughts in morals; and this does not surprise us when the history of man is known. What he has thought is what he was taught by the things he has been in contact with—his fellow-men being the most potent of the things; and out of his relations have grown special ideas and feelings which have brought forth and nourished those human qualities that have for their object the good of man—the many and the one. “It is a manifest absurdity to suppose evil finally prevailing over good under the conduct and administration of a perfect mind.”*

Mr. L. Such good being something related to man’s nature and faculties. He may at times have doubted

* Butler’s Third Sermon on Human Nature.

—such has been his meanness and poverty—whether good existed. “There be many that say, Who will show us any good?” (Ps. iv. 6). The problem being to develop intelligence, emotion, and volition, from the lowest elements—(“the dust of the ground, into which had been breathed the breath of life,” forming the rudimentary material)—who shall say by what steps and gradations, through what dark and devious ways, so feeble an agent would traverse the mighty space between the starting-point and the goal? Who can determine the conditions most favourable for the growth of wisdom and virtue, the relations most helpful to them, or, in general, the activities most to be desiderated? Who can tell, prior to experience, what speculative and active processes will conduce to a given end? If—

“All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players,”

what sort of stage should be set up, and what sort of play? What qualities are wanted in the player, and what performance will best bring them out? Of what objects should the universe consist, and in what subjects should it be reflected? We have no faculties that can answer such questions, yet our criticisms sometimes imply that we have.

Mr. T. If it be true that the evolution of intelligence and feeling, as ultimate factors of the highest worth, be the end and design of the universe, we are truly no judges of the methods suited to produce them, and the machinery around us, painful and perplexing though it be, may most surely shape and mould the refractory material into those higher forms it is predestined to assume.

“The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience he stands waiting, with exactness he grinds
all.”*

* Longfellow.

Mr. L. And the process is evermore subservient to the product. The material fabric, by means of which the transformation is carried on, may prove to be a mere phantasmagoria, an "insubstantial pageant," which "shall dissolve," and leave behind—to reappear under more durable forms—the substantial fruit of emotion and intelligence so painfully wrought out.

Mr. T. Is it possible to imagine a purpose for which the machinery of life was set in motion except the ultimate good of living agents?

Mr. L. Perhaps not; the relations of man and his constitution being the instruments of his good.

Mr. T. His intellectual nature fashioning itself on the objects and sequences around, advances as it apprehends and assimilates them.

Mr. L. And his emotional nature attaining its truest and highest development as it moves in the regulated orbit of its relations and affinities.

Mr. T. And right, as a rule of action, is the legislation of the intellectual nature for the guidance of the emotions and the volitions. Is it not?

Mr. L. I should say so,—the volitional nature being the controlling power of the organisation, deriving its force from the emotions, and its direction from the intelligence.

Mr. T. And, directed by defective or perverted intelligence, is led astray.

Mr. L. Yes, and hence the conflicting standards that have been set up; feeling has usurped a disproportionate authority and assumed a supremacy that did not belong to it. The measure and value of action is not its mere accordance with feeling but its outcome and effect—the final product to the individual and the community.

Mr. T. And a system, an institution, or a theory, is properly impugned when it ceases to bear fruit—"cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" (Luke xiii. 7).

That it once responded to men's feelings and intelligence was enough; when it does so no longer *it is doomed*; the salt has lost its savour—a contingency seldom provided for, and the bare affirmation of which has been too often a presumption not to be pardoned.

Mr. L. And yet much of the salt that has seasoned human affairs has lost its savour in the course of transmission, and become unmistakably vapid and tasteless, but its votaries have nevertheless preserved it with a devout scrupulosity, as though it retained all its pristine power.

Mr. T. The colour and appearance of salt I suppose have remained, but its useful properties are beyond recall; “it is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill,” the last and lowest of all destinies; and therefore men “cast it out” (Luke xiv. 35).

Mr. L. Figuratively, and in fact, “salt is good;” and the salt which in this economy of ours constitutes the true antiseptic is utility. “What do ye more than others?” (Matt. v. 47)—is the final test of principles and men; what a thing does for mankind is that which entitles and enables it to live. It may distribute its benefactions in an endless variety of ways; but that it does good, that it ameliorates the lot of man and makes his life happier and brighter, is what alone gives it vitality and virtue.

Mr. T. “That which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away” (Heb. viii. 13); and to decay means to lose usefulness by losing adaptation to the conditions of life. A mental conception, or a principle, once representing men's feelings and aspirations, when it renders no further service “vanisheth away;” old conditions are broken up, and the thoughts that responded to them may be picturesque but have no power.

“Another race hath been, and other palms are won.”*

* Wordsworth.

Mr. L. One looks with regret upon the vanishing away of what has been associated with human interest and sympathies; and we are apt to imagine that the beautiful and poetic side of things is departing, leaving only the dull and prosaic, but this is a delusion. We have no reason to suppose that the future will be less attractive in its beauty than the past; the ideas of a wider culture may at first seem cold and ungenial, but they will beget an enthusiasm of their own. It is not the prerogative of any age to stereotype ideas for all other ages, nor to hold exclusive dominion over the beautiful; events develop ideas, and yield materials of beauty, to which mind gives colour and form.

“They tell us beauty born above
From no form or shape doth fly.”*

History presents us with many experiments by which an imperfect culture has sought to clothe itself in durable forms; but they “decline and fall” as they come into collision with the constitution of things.

Mr. T. The monastic system was such an experiment, it was adapted to conditions that once prevailed, but when the conditions changed it crumbled into dust. It was formerly a home of hopes and fears created by the circumstances of the world, but these altered, and it was “ready to vanish away.”

“The old order changeth, giving place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways.” †

Mr. L. And the power that built up the system, though one of the mightiest the world has seen, cannot itself resist the disintegrating process that brings into dust whatever opposes the “constitution and course of nature”; it may talk loftily in the old strain, and utter “great swelling words,” but they are “words of vanity,” emptied of their former awe and efficacy; those who employ them may be loth to admit it, but the fact is not to be gainsaid.

* Barry Cornwall.

† Morte d'Arthur.

The phantom at the Vatican that now fulminates so feebly is not the power that ruled the middle ages.

Mr. T. The glory has departed: words and forms remain; but the power is gone, and the men who once wielded it would be the first to proclaim it. The type is changed, and you say that the progress of events produces the change; that things ultimately govern thoughts; that men's notions, upon all subjects, get modified in a way that is inconsistent with innateness. The more obvious and simple relations of life, from the first, have been interpreted with tolerable accuracy, and actions fitted to them made out with a certain uniformity, but beyond this there has been confusion and diversity. The law of the production and interchange of commodities necessary for the sustenance and comfort of man baffled and confounded him for ages. The subtler law that should regulate the conduct of voluntary agents towards themselves, and towards each other, has even been more fatally misunderstood and misapplied; and the one and the other are alike amenable to the teaching of a wider and wider experience, whose final appeal must ever be, as I suppose, the condition of those whom it has trained and governed, or, according to your formula, "by their fruits ye shall know" whatever challenges approbation or disapprobation.

Mr. L. The condition of the world is the true expositor of the systems that rule the world. If the former is bad, the latter are poor notwithstanding their pride. Men set up theories of things based upon abstract notions, and although they produce no fruit they cling to them with invincible pertinacity. If they kept to the more modest task of observing facts and phenomena, and marking their meaning, they would get rid of some perplexing dilemmas. Whether man should have been endowed with a special feeling—a sort of Ithuriel's spear—which should immediately discriminate right from wrong; or whether, placed in contact with the requisite materials, and furnished with appropriate implements, he should be left to

work out the problem by means of an experience which creates while it teaches, may be debateable; but when his ways and his habits have been observed, when it is seen that he acquires by painful effort whatever he possesses, that—

“Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on from point to point,”*

the conclusion is no longer doubtful. Surrounded by inert matter, he must acquaint himself with its laws before he can “have dominion” over its processes and subdue them to his purposes. Surrounded by living agents who affect him even more powerfully than the forces of nature, he must comprehend and adjust himself to them before he can direct his affairs with success; and success means satisfaction to his nature, which satisfaction is for ever enlarging its requirements, “as if increase of appetite had grown by what it fed on.”† Whether ready-made ideas, independent of experience, would be preferable to knowledge gradually acquired and frequently superseded, is a futile speculation. The constitution of man is such that he will never be content with the knowledge he possesses whilst his condition is improvable; and that it is to be improved by knowledge is now his irresistible conviction. Wherever he is hurt or impeded he infers that his information or practice is wrong. “We must conclude the ultimate end designed in the constitution of nature and conduct of Providence is the most virtue and happiness possible.”‡ Happiness as the consequence of virtue, and virtue as the means to happiness.

Mr. T. And man arrives at this conclusion by observation of what takes place around him; but his judgments are provisional, and liable to be set aside on a re-hearing. His instruments are fallible, and if his mind mirrors the facts and forms of existence, these facts and

* Tennyson.

† Hamlet.

‡ Butler's Analogy.—Introduction.

forms may be refracted and distorted by the methods he has adopted or the media to which he is limited.

Mr. L. But we assume that his methods and media are the best for the evolution and training of intelligence and feeling—if indeed this be the purpose and end in view. Dogmatism is always intolerant; and is intolerable in an intelligence which cannot get beyond this condition—“now I know in part”; for partial knowledge can never be positive and absolute. Bishop Blougram’s dogmatism is a fair specimen of its class—

“ If once we choose belief, on all accounts
We can’t be too decisive in our faith,
Conclusive and exclusive in its terms ”

Certainly, if the belief is proportioned to the evidence; for there is no virtue in believing nonsense, be it ever so solemn.

Mr. T. Bishop Blougram’s notion of choosing belief is an odd one; are we to choose without regard to the evidence, or to look only for such evidence as suits the belief? Belief has reference to facts or propositions for which there either is or is not sufficient evidence, and what is sufficient is a fact of the human mind. Man is formed to believe upon evidence and not otherwise, and experience teaches him to reject faulty evidence. But choice would seem to be excluded. You don’t choose to be convinced; you may refuse to look at the evidence, or you may be mentally incapable of appreciating it, or you may shut your mind against it; but that which results in such a case is only a figment, unworthy the name of a belief.

Mr. L. Belief must be founded upon knowledge, the knowledge that a belief asks assent upon grounds that make it credible.

Mr. T. Dr. Newman, you will recollect, contends in his “Grammar of Assent” that Locke’s theory “of the duty of assenting more or less, according to degrees

of evidence, is invalid and erroneous."* Locke pointed out, as the mark of a sincere lover of truth, "the not entertaining any proposition with greater assurance than the proofs it is built on will warrant"; and he adds—"Whoever goes beyond this measure of assent, it is plain receives not truth in the love of it, loves not truth for truth's sake, but for some other by-end." Dr. Newman quotes this statement of Locke, and, in an elaborate argument, undertakes to confute it.

Mr. L. And Hooker, in his "Ecclesiastical Polity," has a passage corresponding with Locke's. He says—"Now, it is not required, nor can be exacted at our hands, that we should yield unto anything other assent than such as doth answer the evidence which is to be had of that we assent unto. . . . The truth is, that how bold and confident soever we may be in words, when it cometh to the point of trial, such as the evidence is, which the truth hath either in itself or through proof, such is the heart's assent thereunto; neither can it be stronger, being grounded as it should be."† Locke and Hooker are at one. What Dr. Newman calls "indefectible certitude," in this province of probationary knowledge is not to be attained by man. We observe an intelligence commencing its career in the lowliest guise, amid scenes and things fitted to quicken and invigorate it, associated moreover with feelings that spring up spontaneously in presence of their objects, and we conclude that the two sets of things were made for and balance each other; we remark also the limitations of this intelligence, and the conditions under which it works, and we see no basis for transcendental dicta. The platform on which we thus stand may seem "common and unclean," but there has been reared up by means of it an edifice of infinite variety and beauty. If "probability is the very guide of life"‡ to such an intelligence, we conclude that the temper and

* Chapter vi.

† Book II. ch. vii. 5

‡ Butler's Analogy.—Introduction.

habits it forms are the fittest for its work. The road into higher states of knowledge and certitude, from lower of ignorance and distrust, may for ever lie through regions of doubt and difficulty—doubt and difficulty being the conditions indispensable to the development of a human intelligence; and the relations of a life constituted like ours, with its passions and its conflicts, being also the fittest for arousing and cultivating emotions and a will such as belong to man. At this stage of his progress he may not be able to assert that there is a perfect coincidence between his apprehension of things and the reality, between the facts of existence and his conceptions of them; nay, as to a large class he may not even affirm that the names by which they are known truly represent in different minds the same notions and things. But his position and his possessions are not therefore to be despised; they may be narrower than he has been wont to believe, but within the region of the knowable, distant alike from presumption and credulity, he will find

“ Ample scope and verge enough ; ”

methods and materials that may enlarge the boundaries of intelligence beyond any limits at present conceivable, and advance in an equal degree the condition of the human race. To be “ destroyed for lack of knowledge ” (Hos. iv. 6) has been too often the lot of man; and to “ seek the living among the dead ” (Luke xxiv. 5), to pursue the shadowy and unattainable and to neglect what lieth at the door, to bewilder himself with a “ knowledge that increaseth sorrow ” (Eccles. i. 18), and to eschew what might bring happiness and hope,—this has been the way of him. But the lesson is not lost, the experience has not been in vain; the future will be better than the past; for he has learned that real knowledge is not his foe but his friend, and its own “ exceeding great reward,” delivering him from the delusion and deceit to

which he was in bonds, and giving to him—within his faculty and sphere—this hope and pledge, “what . . . thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter.”

“Truth fails not ; but her outward forms that bear
The longest date, do melt like frosty rime,
That in the morning whitened hill and plain,
And is no more ; drop, like the tower sublime
Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
Some casual shout, that broke the silent air,
Or the unimaginable touch of Time.” *

* Wordsworth.



PROGRESS.

SEVERAL months since, the Duke of Argyle, in making a speech in the House of Lords, said—"I remember some years ago, at a dinner party, when the conversation turned upon the difficulty of defining civilization, Lord Macaulay replied—'Civilization, why, there is no difficulty in the least in defining it; *we* are civilization, we gentlemen who sit round this table.'" The anecdote is characteristic of Macaulay, of whom, when quite a young man, Lord Melbourne said—"I wish I was as sure of anything as Tom Macaulay is of everything." The dinner party, including, no doubt, men of eminence in the world, thought it was not easy to define civilization. Macaulay promptly and confidently asserts there is no difficulty; but even so the production of a definite piece of civilization is not exactly equivalent to a definition of it. We ask, What are the qualities and characteristics of civilization? and we are presented with a concrete specimen—an actual portion of the thing itself; still we are not told in what particulars the virtue lies.

Given a small party of men in an aristocratic dining-room, in swallow-tail coats and white ties, with appropriate viands and irreproachable wines, with well-appointed flunkies, and all the luxurious appliances which the wealth of the 19th century can lavish upon its votaries—if this be all that is meant by civilization, then no doubt it was to be seen on the occasion to which the Duke of Argyle referred. But we are not under the spell of that confident and brilliant talker, and may be permitted to doubt whether the definition, as it was called, and allowing much latitude for the liberty of speech which such an occasion justifies, was at all an adequate one, or presented

any distinct ideal of so great a conception as civilization. Civilization surely signifies something more than the mere varnish and lacquer which embellish the externals of society, something more than what Carlyle calls clothes philosophy. The dinner party, in truth, was a very small affair in the concerns of even the British Empire; and if civilization is restricted to the narrow limits of such dining-rooms, it also must be an insignificant matter. Progress and civilization are not exactly convertible terms; by real progress we understand something substantial and durable, upon which, certainly, civilization may induce an outside polish and refinement; the glitter of a dining table, and the conversation which enlivens it, may present to us accompaniments of civilization, but do not deserve to be regarded as the ultimate embodiment of it. We must not forget that every age has habits and fashions of its own, which it thinks well of, and contrasts to its own satisfaction with what has gone before. There were men before Agamemnon; there were dinner parties before that which the Duke of Argyle referred to, say one hundred years before, and where the guests were probably as well pleased with themselves as their successors were; and there were men of genius with them too, and they flattered themselves, like Macaulay, that they were civilization, for were they not better fed and better got up, and able to talk better than the people they lived amongst? And yet, when they had well dined, they were sometimes not very well able to walk away, and not unfrequently took a lengthened repose under the table. Civilization with them consisted very much of substantial eating and drinking and carousing; they had been brought up to it, and it formed a part of their ideal of progress. When I first read the Duke of Argyle's speech I was reminded of a scene depicted by a modern artist with great effect, and described in an ancient book in these words: "Belshazzar made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand." If Macaulay and his few

friends dining at a West End mansion in London were civilization, what are we to say of Belshazzar and his thousand lords, with the golden and silver vessels by which they were surrounded? That a few men should be able to dine together after a costly and luxurious fashion, whilst multitudes of their fellow-countrymen are at the same moment living in abject poverty and squalor, is but an indifferent aspect of so great a thing as civilization—if by civilization is intended anything which concerns the general welfare of a nation and a race. If civilization has no regard to these wider issues, if it does not concern itself with those who

On hamely fare may dine,
Wear hodden grey and a' that,

then it is not what is meant by progress. But civilization does look much beyond the manners and fashions of a few people, and the word progress has an equally wide signification.

The physical condition of society—a necessary concomitant of its mental and moral condition—has greatly improved, even within the period of our own short lives. The world is better supplied with many things which make it a more desirable place to live in; there are comforts and conveniences attainable now-a-days which were not formerly accessible to the same class of people; more people can read, and books are cheaper; houses and towns are wholesomer and cleaner—all this, and much more, is visible in our own country and in others. Railways and machinery have multiplied indefinitely gratifications which were altogether out of the reach of our ancestors; and all this is unmistakable progress of a certain kind. But it exists along with contrasts which ought not to be overlooked. The same sort of thing, moreover, has existed before; that is, the men of one generation have been able to feel that they were, in some respects, better off than those who went before them. Egypt and Babylon, at the zenith of their glory, could,

no doubt, look back upon a past which was something lower and less splendid than that which succeeded it. When Nebuchadnezzar contemplated what he called "Great Babylon, which I have built," he, no doubt, had in his mind an inferior Babylon which he had once known; and when Augustus Cæsar boasted that he found Rome brick and left it marble, he regarded the changed circumstances as indicating an advancing civilization and a forward step in the march of progress.

In his *History of England*, Macaulay paints a brilliant picture of the condition of England as he knew it and as it was known to Englishmen a few centuries before. Nothing can be more attractive reading than this chapter, and no evidence of progress more satisfactory and convincing; but a Roman artist of equal skill would probably have presented to the first Emperor of Rome an equally gratifying contrast; he would have depicted the rude forefathers of the Roman State as leading, in every way, a less desirable existence than their more literary and luxurious posterity. What men have become accustomed to they think essential to human life, and they regard with some sort of contempt a people who have been worse furnished than themselves with what they find so necessary. Of the Romans under the empire, Gibbon says—"In their dress, their table, their houses, and their furniture, the favourites of fortune united every refinement of conveniency, of elegance, and of splendour, whatever could soothe their pride or gratify their sensuality;" and a party of them dining together would probably have entertained the same opinion of themselves as Macaulay did of his friends.

There has been again and again in the history of the world the little clique of men meeting together at the table of one of their order, with all the distinguishing features of their era, and regarding themselves as civilization. The great business of eating drew them together, and whether it was at Babylon, at Persepolis,

at Memphis, or at Rome, they looked upon themselves as the most advanced representatives of the human race—and yet the civilization of which they thought so much has perished, and all its pride and pomp have been trampled in the dust.

This is a phase of things which has created a large amount of perplexity. It has been said that “modern civilization is destined to experience in full measure vicissitudes of national weal and woe, periods of growth, of full vigour, and of age; the blessedness of creative effort, in religion, polity and art; the comfort of enjoying the material and intellectual acquisitions it has won; perhaps also, some day, the decay of productive power in the satiety of contentment with the goal attained. But the goal, too, will only be temporary; the grandest system of civilization has its orbit, and may complete its course, but not so the human race, to which, even when it seems to have attained its goal, the old task is ever set anew with a wider range and a deeper meaning.”*

Lord Byron puts it in another way; contemplating the ruins of Rome from the Capitol, he says—

There is the moral of all human tales,
 'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past.
 First freedom and then glory—when that fails,
 Wealth, vice, corruption—barbarism at last,
 And History with all her volumes vast
 Hath but one page.

How are we to interpret the series of events which make up this one page of history? Is Lord Byron's the true account of them? Is history a mere cycle—a drama with its five acts, which is repeated upon the same stage in different ages by different actors, with different scenes, and costumes, and catastrophes? Lord Derby, in a public address which he delivered some years ago, asked this question—“Have we reached that point which sooner or later must be reached by every nation in the

* “The History of Rome,” by Theodor Mommsen.

course of its history, when material progress ceases, and material decadence begins?" Why *must* this be the conclusion? Is there some inherent destiny in things which brings it about? The clear and critical intellect of Lord Derby offers us no solution of the matter, but merely asserts that a certain thing must come to pass. Why must it? Because material decadence has been the fortune of the past, has the future therefore nothing better to disclose? Lord Byron, in the history of Rome, reads, in fact, the history of the world—first, freedom and then glory; when that fails, wealth, vice, corruption, and then barbarism. Doubtless this is not an unfair summary of Roman progress as it is usually represented; but is it the moral of all human tales, and are they all but the same rehearsal of the past? Empires widely separated in time and place, existing under different conditions, and consisting of every variety of people, have vanished from the earth; Lord Byron's description may be literally true that "History with all her volumes vast hath but one page," when we take into account only the materials which are contained in written annals. Perhaps, however, Lord Byron drew his conclusions, and pointed his moral, from too narrow a basis of facts. He had travelled in the East and through Greece, and comparing the splendid past of this latter country with its then utter desolation he was profoundly impressed with the contrast. Of the isles of Greece he said—

Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

He has depicted, in imperishable verse, the ruin and degradation of Rome; he was familiar with the history of the earlier empires of the world and with their fate, and he saw in the overthrow of them all the working out, with more or less varying circumstances, of the destiny of nations; and he assumed that the future of the world would resemble that which was recorded in the annals

of the past. There is, however, as we know, one set of circumstances which Byron did not take account of.

He was acquainted with the written history of the world, but he knew nothing of that pre-historic period which geology has brought to light; to him the history of mankind was that which is contained in written records; he was not acquainted with that more ancient history which is found in the strata of the earth, which modern science has disinterred, and which enlarges the horizon of our view in reference to the progress and history of mankind. In our own neighbourhood have been found at various times, below the surface of the soil, materials of human workmanship which satisfy us that the Romans once lived hereabouts; such things have been discovered in many parts of England, and we are quite certain they prove incontestably that the Romans once occupied this island. Just in the same way, but lower down in the strata, there have been found materials, flint tools and implements of rude workmanship, which are clearly the production of men who have lived upon the earth in an era of unknown remoteness. The evidence of these facts has not been discovered just here and there, but has been found over an area extending from Central and Southern Europe to Madras and China, and over the American continent. The effect of such discoveries must be to throw back indefinitely the date of man's existence upon the earth, and to enlarge our idea of his progress; it is one thing to start from the Egyptian history of Herodotus, as the primeval page of the past, and quite another to start from a pre-historic period to which geology introduces us. In a very recently published work, written for the special purpose of reconciling all the knowledge we possess on this subject, the writer says:—"If we were to enumerate the various proofs deduced from geology showing that man has existed upon this earth for a hundred thousand years and more, our book would

assume proportions too large for its purpose, and, indeed, it would be unnecessary, since we assume that all our readers have a knowledge of the rudiments of geology. Suffice it to say that man's existence was coeval with that of the extinct mammals of the Pliocene period. Side by side with the bones of the mammoth, the woolly rhinoceros, the cave lion, and other creatures which once roamed over England and the continent of Europe, are to be found stone hatchets and spear heads, and knives made of sharpened flints, the rough weapons of the men who lived in those bygone ages. Again, similar rude weapons have been found buried beneath the stony floors of limestone caves in the South of France and elsewhere, and with these implements in some cases have been found parts of human skeletons. Here, too, have been found the bones of the reindeer, a creature which inhabits only the colder latitudes, showing to us that man was in existence at an age when the climate of Southern France resembled the present climate of Northern Russia. Other remains of pre-historic man have been found in the pile dwellings in the lakes of Switzerland. Indeed, dozens of instances might be brought forward showing that men were living upon the earth tens of thousands of years ago."*

The representative man whose history has to be put together out of materials found in the strata of the earth, and the man who lived when written records came into existence, are separated from each other by an interval which cannot be measured, and the progress from the one state to the other was probably the hardest journey which man has made.

The Rev. Professor Mahaffy, of Trinity College, Dublin, in his "Lectures on Primitive Civilizations," says—"As to antiquity, what claim can the Greeks have to it when we think of the Egyptians, the Babylonians, and the

* "The Geology of Genesis," by E. C. Robinson. Elliot Stock: London, 1885.

Phœnicians, who all flourished and decayed long before we first hear of culture in the Grecian Seas; and even as regards these, the oldest known empires of the world, can we say that they in any degree approached the first origin of the world? Can we say, from a higher and larger point of view than ours, even the venerable pyramids are not late, very late in the history of the world? Who knows whether it did not require as many thousands of years to produce these great structures as it will require to destroy them? When, therefore, we mean by the word antiquity any approach to the first days of man upon the earth I suppose the only remains which lay claim to such a dignity are the ancient arrow heads and bows found in the gravel beds of Picardy and the limestone caves of Belgium, deposits of an age far more remote from the records of Egypt, Babylon, and Greece, than these are from the present day."

Homer seems to have been acquainted with traditions which had reference to some rude and unorganized period of man's history, for in the *Odyssey*, Ulysses says—

With heavy hearts we laboured through the tide,
 To coasts unknown, and oceans yet untried;
 The land of Cyclops first, a savage kind,
 Nor tamed by manners nor by laws confined;
 Untaught to plant, to turn the glebe and sow,
 They all their products to free nature owe;
 By these no statutes and no rights are known,
 No council held, no monarch fills the throne;
 But high on hills or airy cliffs they dwell,
 Or in deep caves, whose entrance leads to hell.

Ulysses recognises the conditions of a settled agriculture, the holding of councils, the existence of acknowledged laws and rights as things which mark off savage from civilized man. The Greeks with whom Ulysses was acquainted were obviously much in advance of the savage people he met with, but there is no reason to suppose that the ancestors of the Greeks had not passed through the same stage of barbarism as these savages. How it

happens that one race gets the start of others in the march of civilization we cannot tell; there are advantages of climate, there are positions on the shores of seas, easy of navigation, where the soil is fertile, and the useful productions of nature are abundant and indigenious—all these things are favourable to the growth of mental cultivation, and to the development of industry and enterprise where man has “ample scope and verge enough” for the exercise and stimulation of his faculties.

By what steps and processes he made his way upwards from the lowly condition in which he existed in the pre-historic times we can only faintly imagine; specimens of his workmanship remain, of his ideas and feelings no records exist. Probably if we had historic records of the ante-historic ages; if some superhuman agency had set down the thoughts and actions of men ages before they could set them down for themselves, we should know that this first step in civilization was the hardest step. But this is a page of history which has not yet been written, and for the writing of which no materials exist. We meet man first in the page of history upon the shores of the Mediterranean sea in Egypt, and when we meet him there, he is a very different being from the man we left with his stone hatchets and spear heads made of sharpened flints, the tenant of caves once occupied by the mammoth and the woolly rhinoceros. The late Dr. Erasmus Wilson, to whom we are indebted for the obelisk on the Thames Embankment, says:—“The first dynasty of Egypt, that of Menes, introduces man to our notice as already an accomplished being. He is a geometrician, an architect, a priest, a warrior; he is skilled in art and science, he is an engraver of inscriptions, an engrosser of books, and the inventor of a written language; the papyrus supplies him with a page for his writing, and the enduring stone a material for his sculpture. The Egyptians considered themselves to be descended from the gods of their forefathers, to have been the people of the

sun god, Horus, when he had his dwelling on the earth. If we follow them on their onward journey we have presented to our minds a succession of things and events, all of which are the first of their kind. These are the first house, the first city, the first pyramid, the first temple, the first obelisk, and so on. All these are the beginning of development, and the steps by which we are enabled to contemplate the first ideas of the people and their subsequent expansion and growth." Egyptian chronology is at present somewhat conjectural, but there are landmarks which are fairly clear, and the date of the first dynasty, that of Menes, to which the remarks of Dr. Erasmus Wilson refer, is fixed by the best authorities at about 5000 years before our era, or say 7000 years ago; and this date shows no trace of approach to a primitive and uncivilised state of things. On the contrary, Menes is related to have carried out a great engineering work, by which the Nile was embanked, its course changed, and the new capital city, Memphis, built on the site reclaimed. His next successor is credited with having written learned treatises on medicine and anatomy, and the earliest pyramid—that of Sakhara—was probably built by the king who ascended the throne 88 years after the death of Menes. The annals and monuments of Chaldæa and China tell the same tale as those of Egypt, of dense population and a high degree of civilization already established. It was in the great alluvial valleys of such rivers as the Nile and the Euphrates that agriculture displaced the hunting and pastoral stage of life, and led to the building of great cities and the establishment of powerful monarchies. One after another there grew up great empires—Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian—which passed away; and the very sites of the cities whose names survived were until recently unknown. What was the cause, or what were the causes, which brought about these results? While these empires were great and prosperous they, no doubt, felt that their power rested on

a solid basis, that they had made great progress, and had a fair prospect before them ; did they come to an end by the operation of occult causes? Is the organisation of a nation like that of a tree, which has only a certain quantity of vitality in it, and which of necessity must decay and perish? Such a comparison is often enough made, until we come to think that there is some real analogy between the two things. All the empires which the world has known have, after a longer or a shorter lapse of time, passed their meridian and have disappeared. Is this the inevitable destiny which must overtake them all, or can it be explained by any facts or principles which were peculiar to the empires of the past, and which have now ceased to operate?

We may safely say that man does not come into the world with a ready made stock of ideas, which fit him to make the best of what he finds here. Having to acquire all his ideas, it is very likely that he would make many blunders in the process, and in the course of working them out in practice. As a matter of fact we know that he has done so. He had everything to learn about himself and his dwelling place. Well, if the supplying of his daily wants was a hard work, and the making of garments not an easy one, if the management of wife and children gave him a good deal of trouble, the management of a growing tribe of people was likely to give much more ; therefore, we may be sure that the government of a mass of hungry, and unruly, and intractable, and quarrelsome people, in the neighbourhood of other strange people, equally hungry and quarrelsome, would be an arduous business, the only law at first recognised being the law of the strongest—

For why? because the good old rule
Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.

If society commenced in this fashion—and we have

pretty clear proof that it did—then it is evident that the experiment of converting such material into law-abiding communities has been, upon the whole, what it might have been expected to be—a course of wars and fightings. Take the Egyptians as an example. They had a fine piece of territory, in a splendid position, and of great fertility; and there were warlike people in the world who were not so well off as these Egyptians, and it was easy to pick a quarrel with them, and make war upon and plunder them, and break up the civilization. Can anybody suggest how such a catastrophe under the circumstances could be avoided? There existed alongside these early empires, or within reach of them, nomadic tribes, who, as their name imports, lived a wandering and predatory life, pasturing their cattle wherever it pleased them, and ready to fight whoever disputed their right of possession. The nomads were the first occupants, and may be regarded as the constant enemies of those who sought shelter in towns. Innumerable savage hordes must have again and again despoiled the more peaceable population, until society became strong enough to offer an organized resistance and fight on its own account, in what we should call a legitimate manner. We have an example of the early belligerent state of society in the history of Abraham. Certain kings, we are told, made war upon certain other kings, and the victors “took all the goods” of the vanquished, and “all their victuals, and went their way.” Besides this they captured Abraham’s brother, whereupon Abraham armed 318 of his servants, pursued the kings, defeated them, and got back what they had stolen. These kings were probably nothing more than petty chiefs, otherwise 318 men, without arms of precision, would hardly have made such short work of them. But it shows how loosely society was held together. There is something more in the history. “Abraham and Lot,” it is said, “had each flocks and herds and tents, so many that the land was

not able to bear them that they might dwell together ; for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together," and "there was strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle." This want of room, what is called "congestion" in these days, was thus manifested very early, and the remedy of migration or emigration soon suggested itself. We have only to multiply this state of things all over the inhabited world and we see at once the germs of the feuds and strifes and roving which prevailed. A little further on in the same history we find that the Philistines filled up the wells which had been digged, and that quarrels arose out of these things. The population of the world then was evidently in a lawless and combative condition, and there had not yet arisen any sufficiently organized authority to keep order. Considering that the world was learning its lesson in the art of government, and considering that the scholars were in the main unmanageable and refractory, we can see that there was sure to be contention amongst so many ill-defined rights, and there were besides abundance of people who could say like Macduff—

I have no words, my voice is in my sword.

Progress means, at any rate, the passing from one state of things to another ; it is a process of movement, generally supposed to be from a worse state to a better. Dr. Johnson says—"Civilization is the acquisition of the habits, manners, and dispositions of human beings, who live together in the same city or state, opposed to that of men who live in a condition of natural wildness and rudeness." This natural wildness and rudeness preceded, of course, the building of cities and states. We have no difficulty then in concluding that the imperfectly civilized few have had to struggle against the uncivilized many, and that the preponderating barbarism of the world has broken down, from time to time, the barriers which have

been raised here and there by the more civilized races ; also, that these more advanced races made war upon one another to satisfy their needs and greeds, or to defend themselves against the rapacity of others. In these circumstances there were sufficient elements of disorder and conflict to account for the fall of the early empires which grew up in the East. The Grecian states occupied a different position, and came to an end through the operation of different causes. Greece was a country of small extent, broken up into a variety of independent governments, which had no proper national combination or cohesion. They continually quarrelled among themselves ; Athens and Sparta had a long and bitter contest with each other ; Sparta and Thebes the same. The Macedonians then obtained the supremacy, and at last they were involved in a common ruin by the military preponderance of Rome. Such practically was the fate of all that was left of previous empires ; they were subdued by the superior weight and organization of Roman power. The final failure of nations to retain their position in the world has arisen from their inability to cope with their enemies on the field of battle. A civilization which could not defend itself against attack was sure to be attacked, if it possessed anything that excited the cupidity of other powers. The barbaric element in the world has nowhere yet been driven out. There has been an unceasing contest between the better forces and the worse from the beginning of time ; whatever civilization has existed has been the triumph of the better forces. Rome represents the ancient world in its more advanced form, and in its most effective and concentrated strength. There never existed a state which so completely overshadowed contemporary states as Rome did. She never approached the intellectual supremacy of Greece, but as an organization of force, as an engine of government, as a military machine, Rome had no equal. A living German writer of the highest

authority—the historian Mommsen—says—“ These were the principles on which the community of Rome governed itself: a free people understanding the duty of obedience, disowning all mystical ideas of divine right, absolutely equal in the eye of the law and one with another, bearing the sharply defined impress of a nationality of their own; while, at the same time, they wisely, as well as magnanimously, opened their gates wide for intercourse with other lands.” Byron says—

Alas! the lofty city; and alas!
 The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
 When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass
 The conqueror's sword in bearing fame away;
 Alas, for Tully's voice and Virgil's lay,
 And Livy's pictured page! But these shall be
 Her resurrection; all beside—decay.
 Alas, for earth, for never shall we see
 That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was free.

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire
 Have dealt upon the seven-hilled city's pride;
 She saw her glories star by star expire;
 And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride,
 Where the car climbed the Capitol.

There was nothing mysterious or occult in all this. Given such a state of things as we know to have existed in the world, there being some climates and positions better than others, law and order meanwhile being only in course of manufacture, and men doing, as we are told on high authority, what was right in their own eyes, it should not surprise us that nations so situated had to pass through many anarchies before they came to that settled condition in which the supremacy of law is acknowledged, and is administered with an equal and an even hand.

It was the irruption of barbarians, the untamed hordes of uncivilized races, which finally broke down the empire of Rome, though there were many other causes which preceded and accompanied this overwhelming disaster, which Gibbon has pointed out in his immortal history.

But there is one central circumstance which perhaps more than any other is answerable for the great catastrophe, and which was, an inheritance bequeathed to Rome by the generations that preceded her: this circumstance was the existence of slavery. Slavery, from the earliest ages, was the condition of a large portion of mankind in almost every country; and it has only been abolished within the present century by the nations of Europe. It existed amongst the Jews; it existed before Moses in the time of the Patriarchs, and it still continues to exist in the East. The "servants" mentioned in Scripture were for the most part unconditional and perpetual slaves; they were strangers, either taken prisoners in war, or purchased from the neighbouring nations. They and their children were the property of their masters, who could sell them, inflict upon them corporal punishment, and in some cases put them to death. But the Hebrews had slaves of their own nation. These were men who sold themselves through poverty, or they were insolvent debtors, or men who had committed a theft and had not the means of making restitution, as required by law. Not only was the person of the debtor liable to the claims of the creditor, but his right also extended to the debtors' wife and children. Moses regulated the condition of slavery. He drew a wide distinction between the alien slave and the native servant. The latter could not be a perpetual bondsman, but might be redeemed, and during the time of their servitude they were to be treated with kindness. The directions contained in Leviticus are these:—"Thy bond-men and thy bond-maids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bond-men and bond-maids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land; and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your

children after you, to inherit them for a possession ; they shall be your bondmen for ever ; but over your brethren the children of Israel ye shall not rule one over another with rigour."

In ancient times all prisoners of war were reduced to slavery, being either distributed amongst the army or sold by auction for the benefit of the troops ; in yet earlier times prisoners of war were killed, and making slaves of them may have been reckoned a measure of humanity. Christian nations of Europe, in later ages, have promoted wars in Africa that they might carry on the slave trade by purchasing the unfortunate prisoners taken in these wars. The sale of Joseph by his brethren is a proof of the antiquity of the practice. The purchase and use of slaves is frequently mentioned by Homer. The Greeks were so accustomed to the fact of slavery that none of their philosophers condemned it ; both Plato and Aristotle approved it as a necessary institution. According to the strict principles of the Roman law, the master could treat his slave as he pleased ; he could sell him, punish him, and put him to death. The slave could not contract a marriage, and could acquire no property. A runaway slave could not lawfully be received or harboured. It is true that in the time of Justinian the severity of these laws was modified. Gibbon tells us that in the time of Claudius the slaves were at least equal in numbers to the free inhabitants. As the territories of the Roman State extended, the patricians came into possession of large estates, the property of conquered people, and for the cultivation of these estates sufficient free labour could not be obtained, as the freemen were constantly liable to serve in the armies, and so it came to pass that the land was ultimately cultivated by slave labour. Through war and commerce slaves could easily be obtained at a cheap rate, and their number became so great that the poorer class of freemen were thrown out of employment. In the time of Tiberius the three great evils under which the Empire was

said to suffer were the inability of Italy to support itself with food, the depopulated rural estates, and the tribes of slaves who occupied the land.

It was not merely the large farm system which was destroying the Roman Empire, but the poor agriculture, the waste, the extravagance, the bad management, aversion to labour, and general discontent—the natural fruit, in the rural districts, of slavery. It was eating away the character and life of the ancient world. Referring to the downfall of Rome, the historian Mommsen says:—"It was no accidental catastrophe which patriotism and genius might have warded off; it was old social evils—at the bottom of all, the ruin of the middle class by the slave proletariat—that brought destruction on the Roman Commonwealth. The abyss of misery and woe which opens before our eyes, in this most miserable of all proletariats, we leave to be fathomed by those who venture to gaze into such depths; it is very possible that, compared with the suffering of the Roman slaves, the sum of all negro suffering is but a drop."

Slavery had aided in the massing together of those wide farms which were the ruin of Italy. It had emptied the fields and villages of the hardy rustics who had once been the backbone of Roman power. Slavery had filled the cities with idle and profligate babblers, and had indoctrinated these men—themselves often freed men, or the sons of freed men—with the pestilent notion that manual labour was beneath the dignity of a citizen. The pauperizing legislation of Rome first wore the insidious form of a gentle intervention to lower the price of corn. When Africa, Sicily, and Spain were pouring in their tributes of corn or money to the exchequer of the republic, it was not an unnatural suggestion that the wealth thus acquired might fairly be expended in easing the material condition of the Roman citizens, of the men who had borne the heaviest blows in the battles of the country. But the result was that Roman citizens were enabled to live a life

of dissipation and idleness in the Roman forum by the toil of Spanish and Sicilian peasants, and the Etrurian and Latin farmer could not sell his corn at a profit when the whole machinery of the republic was being employed to sell corn from beyond the seas at far less than the cost price in the Roman capital. The Italian farmer succumbed in this conflict, and vast domains worked by slaves took the place of the small yeoman's holding, and the free and happy homesteads gave place to the slaves' house of bondage.

Slavery was not extinguished by the fall of the Roman empire; it was ultimately transformed into serfdom. Afterwards, Christian nations bought slaves in Africa, and transferred them to their colonies, a policy if possible, more atrocious and less excusable than the ancient one; and it is only within the last fifty years that the British Parliament emancipated British slaves and paid twenty millions sterling for their redemption. In the United States of America much more recently, as we all know, slavery has been abolished as the result of a gigantic civil war. Slavery still darkens many parts of the world, but the moral atmosphere of modern times is gradually lessening its area, and we can hardly doubt that its final doom will not be postponed very long. In the history of the human race it must be reckoned a real step of progress that such a brand should be removed from it. The idea that there was a class of men who rightly and lawfully might be the property of other men, and might be treated as cattle, has been blotted from the records of civilized nations, although it was founded upon the legislation of centuries, and had been sanctioned by innumerable wise and good men. It is this change of ideas which constitutes progress,

“ Through the ages one increasing purpose runs,”

although the “ purpose ” is not discerned at the time; the great facts of history, its stirring events and heroic achievements, draw away the attention from the moral

results which are involved. What, it may be asked, is the outcome of the pageant which moves along with so much pomp and circumstance? What has humanity gained by all its struggles and all its sufferings? It has enshrined in its laws and its literature, in its art and its religion, principles of a nobler and more impartial justice, and sentiments of a truer and more catholic sympathy; it has established upon a basis which cannot be moved the indefeasible right of every human being to the possession of personal liberty; and it has for ever broken the yoke of that hard bondage which gave into the hands of feeble, erring man authority to crush and destroy his fellow, because he had dared to believe and to act according to the dictate of his own feeling and conscience.

If we want to measure the progress of a people we can hardly do it more effectually than by comparing their laws and their judicial proceedings at one period and at another. Their legal system probably represents the best they were capable of at the time; it may have been a product of popular passion, or it may have been the work of arbitrary power and prejudice, but, at any rate, it tells us what was thought of certain public and private acts, and of the manner in which it was deemed right and just to deal with them. We know what the Romans thought of slavery, and passing down the stream of time, say a thousand years, we may learn what people in authority then regarded as criminal acts, and of what punishment they thought such acts deserving. In his "History of the Criminal Law of England," Sir James Stephen, one of the most eminent of Her Majesty's Judges, says: "The last of the ecclesiastical offences which I need notice, and which became an offence by statute, was one which had a strange and terrible history, namely, witchcraft. This offence came in process of time to be regarded with special horror, and to be believed in with an ardour and eagerness which it is now hard to understand. The first Act passed upon the subject was in the reign of

Henry VIII. This Act makes it felony to practice, or cause to be practised, conjuration, witchcraft, enchantment, or sorcery to get money; or to consume any person in his body or goods; or to provoke any person to unlawful love, or for any other unlawful purpose. This Act was repealed, but was afterwards revived in the reign of Elizabeth, owing, as is said, to the increase of witchcraft, and it was made felony, without benefit of clergy, to use, practice, or exercise any invocations of evil or wicked spirits to any intent whatever, or to use, practice, or exercise any witchcraft, enchantment, charm, or sorcery whereby any person happens to be killed or destroyed. It also provides that everyone shall be liable to a year's imprisonment and six hours' pillory, and on a second offence to be a felon without benefit of clergy, who uses any witchcraft, enchantment, &c., whereby any person happens to be wasted, consumed, or lamed in his body or member, or whereby any goods or chattels of any person are destroyed, wasted, or impaired. The law relating to witchcraft was most severe, and trials for the offence most common in the seventeenth century." Sir James Stephen says also—"The readiness with which religious people in the seventeenth century gave way to cruel superstitions, and the fierce fanaticism with which they insisted on the reality of witchcraft, are a stain upon them and upon their religion. Those who laughed at the ridiculous nonsense which the witchfinders believed in were wiser, and, as far as that matter went, better than those who prayed and groaned over it." The number who laughed at it, however, was very small. The remarks of Mr. Justice Stephen relate exclusively to England. Mr. Lecky, the historian, dealing with the same subject, extends his view to the continent of Europe. He says—"The legislation of almost every land enacted laws for the punishment of witchcraft, magic, and sorcery. Acute judges, whose lives were spent in sifting evidence, investigated the question on countless occasions, and condemned the

accused. Tens of thousands of victims perished by the most agonizing and protracted torments without exciting the faintest compassion, and as they were, for the most part, extremely ignorant and extremely poor, party feeling or avarice had but little influence on the subject. Nations that were completely separated by position, by interests, and by character, on this one question were united. In almost every province of Germany the persecution raged with fearful intensity. Seven thousand victims are said to have been burned at Treves, six hundred at Bamberg, and eight hundred in a single year in the diocese of Wurtzburg. In France decrees were passed on the subject by the Parliaments of Paris, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Rouen, and Dijon, and they were followed by a harvest of blood. At Toulouse, four hundred persons perished for sorcery at a single execution; a judge at Nancy boasted that he had put to death eight hundred witches in sixteen years." Spain, Italy, Savoy, and Switzerland tell the same story. "These," Mr. Lecky says, "are only a few of the more salient events in that long series of persecutions which extended over every country, and continued for centuries with unabated fury. If we ask why it is that the world has rejected what was once so universally and so intensely believed, why a narrative of an old woman who had been seen riding on a broom-stick, or who was proved to have transformed herself into a wolf, and to have devoured the flocks of her neighbours, is deemed so entirely incredible, most persons would probably be unable to give a very definite answer to the question. It is not that we have examined the evidence and found it insufficient. It is rather because the idea of absurdity is so strongly attached to such narratives that it is difficult to consider them with gravity. Yet, at one time, no such improbability was felt, and hundreds of persons have been burnt simply on the grounds I have mentioned." Another more recent writer on this subject says—"It was enough for ignorant and frightened sufferers to accuse

some poor, misshapen, squinting old woman of casting on them the evil eye, or of appearing in the form of a cat, to secure her trial by torture and her condemnation to an unpitied death. There is no sadder chapter in the annals of the world than this ghastly story of witch-finding and witch-burning. Sprenger computes that during the Christian epoch no less than nine millions of persons, mostly women of the poorer classes, were put to death by burning; victims of the survival, into relatively civilized times, of an illusion which had its origin in primitive thought."

In a memoir of Ray, the naturalist, just published, an extract is given from his diary, kept during a journey in Scotland in 1662. He says—"At the time we were in Scotland, divers women were burnt for witches, they reported to the number of about one hundred and twenty."

Whilst I am writing this, I meet with the following paragraph in the *Times* newspaper of the 11th September, which brings us, as it were, into actual contact with this phase of history:—

MONUMENT TO A "SORCERESS."—A monument has recently been erected in the Danvers Cemetery (Massachusetts) to Rebecca Nurse, who was hung as a "sorceress" at Salem in 1692. She had been arrested upon the plaint of Edward and Jonathan Putnam for having "practised certain diabolical arts called sorcery upon Ann Putnam, Mary Woolcot, and others," but when put upon her trial the jury at first returned a verdict of not guilty; but this was so unfavourably received by the audience that they allowed themselves to be intimidated, and "reconsidered" their verdict. The judge allowed them to do this, and when they came into court a second time with a verdict of guilty, he sentenced Rebecca Nurse to death, and the sentence was executed. She was taken in chains to the village church and formally excommunicated, after which she was hung upon Gallows Hill. Her friends secretly obtained possession of her body, and buried her in the Danvers Cemetery, where the monument, which is eight feet high by two feet wide, has now been erected to this victim of fanaticism.

Such was the sort of law reckoned good enough for this class of victims. In 1664 two women were hanged in

Suffolk, under a sentence of Sir Matthew Hale—a most accomplished and exemplary judge—and he took the opportunity of declaring that the reality of witchcraft was unquestionable, for, he said, the wisdom of all nations had provided laws against such persons, which is an argument of their confidence in such a crime. Sir Thomas Browne, who was a great physician, as well as a great writer and most humane man, according to his light, was called as a witness, and swore that he was clearly of opinion that the persons were bewitched. A very eminent writer, in this same seventeenth century, and a contemporary of both Hale and Browne, wrote a book entitled “*The Vanity of Dogmatising*,” in which he defends with great force and acuteness his belief in witchcraft. He says—“I must premise that this, being a matter of fact, is only capable of the evidence of authority and of sense, and by both these the being of witches and diabolical contracts is most abundantly confirmed. All histories are full of the exploits of these instruments of darkness, and the testimony of all ages, not only of the rude and barbarous, but of the most civilized and polished world, brings tidings of their performances. We have the attestation of thousands of eye and ear witnesses, and those not of the easily deceivable vulgar only, but of wise and grave discerners, when no interest could oblige them to agree together in a common lie. I say we have the light of all these circumstances to confirm us in the belief of things done by persons of despicable power and knowledge beyond the reach of art and ordinary nature. Standing public records have been kept of these well attested relations, and epochs made of these unwonted events. Laws in many nations have been enacted against these vile practices; those among the Jews and our own are notorious. Such cases have often been determined with us, by wise and revered judges, upon clear and constructive evidence; and thousands in our nation have suffered death for their vile compacts with apostate

spirits. All this I might largely prove in their particular instances, but that is not needful, since those who deny the being of witches do it not out of ignorance of these heads of argument, which probably they have heard a thousand times, but from an apprehension that such a belief is absurd and the things impossible."

Can an argument more reasonable looking than this be constructed? The writer knew very well what argument was, and what facts were, and he stated a case in which it is difficult to find a flaw, and yet the whole fabric was a delusion and a snare, and the men were right who disregarded his evidence and his conclusions, on the ground that such a belief was absurd and the things were impossible. There are as many witches in the world now as there were then (and more Lancashire witches), but the sword has been sheathed that smote them, and the fire has been quenched that burned them, and the world is not the worse for the change, but the better. Even now we may not be able to prove that some poor, old, forlorn woman does not ride through the air on a broomstick, and turn herself into a wolf or a cat, but we do know that the whole thing is nonsense, and to curtail the dominion of nonsense—solemn or silly—which remains in the world, is a kind of progress. The progress which enables us to travel forty miles an hour instead of eight, to live in ceiled houses instead of old-fashioned huts, to wear broadcloth instead of sheepskins, to substitute gas and electricity for rushlights and farthing candles, makes a great noise in the world; but the progress which puts an end to a systematic and prolonged and cruel persecution, carried on under forms of law, must be reckoned a greater gain to humanity.

The splendours of material progress so far dazzle us that we come to believe in them as the ultimate object of civilization; we flatter ourselves that because so much has been done no retrograde steps are now possible. It is well to look at the other side of the question. A pessi-

mist will say it is doubtful whether the world has now got anything grander and greater than "the cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces, and the solemn temples" of the past; and he will tell us also that though certain forms of evil have been abated, others have grown up in their place; that the quantity of misery and mischief in the world is not less now than it was formerly; and that the irrationality is quite as great. And in proof of this he will point to the foolishness and destructiveness of war, and refer us to such a passage as the following from Thomas Carlyle: "What, speaking in quite unofficial language, is the net purport and upshot of war? To my own knowledge, for example, there dwell and toil in the British village of Dumdrudge usually some five hundred souls. From these, by certain natural enemies of the French, there are successively selected, during the French war, say thirty able-bodied men. Dumdrudge, at her own expense, has suckled and nursed them; she has, not without difficulty and sorrow, fed them up to manhood, and even trained them to crafts, so that one can weave, another build, another hammer, and the weakest can stand under thirty stone avoirdupois. Nevertheless, amid much weeping and swearing, they are selected, all dressed in red, and shipped away at the public charges, some two thousand miles, or say only to the south of Spain, and fed there till wanted. And now to that same spot in the south of Spain are thirty similar French artisans from a French Drumdrudge in like manner wending, till at length, after infinite effort, the two parties come into actual juxtaposition. Straightway the word 'Fire' is given, and they blow the souls out of one another, and in place of sixty brisk, useful craftsmen the world has sixty dead carcasses, which it must bury and anew shed tears for. Had these men any quarrel? Busy as the Devil is, not the smallest. They lived far enough apart, were the entirest strangers, nay, in so wide a universe there was even, unconsciously, by commerce some mutual help-

ness between them. How, then? Simpleton! Their governors had fallen out, and instead of shooting one another had the cunning to made these poor blockheads shoot."

This is, of course, broad caricature, but not without a solid substratum of truth. Perhaps there is nothing more irrational than war, except the causes which produce it; and so long as the causes exist the consequences will exist also. War has existed from the beginning of historical time as the necessary correlative of the disturbing elements which human nature has developed, and the nations which have possessed the most vigorous fighting qualities have become the rulers of the world and the founders of empires, and the less capable combatants have been degraded into the bondslaves of the victors. Ambition and cupidity, envy and jealousy, and such like passions, are the causes of war, and have always troubled mankind, and trouble them now; and the question is, which is the greatest evil, these passions or war?

The art of war has probably, in all respects, kept pace with the arts of peace. Whatever science has done for the latter has been appropriated by the former, until the destructive agencies at the disposal of modern states are infinitely greater than they were in ancient times. That they are a standing menace to civilization cannot be doubted. Are they under more effective control than they once were? that is, are they always brought into action by saner councils, cooler heads, and sounder judgments, or may they be set in motion by personal feeling and jealousy, by the caprice, and irritability, and wilfulness of a very few individuals? It may, perhaps, be admitted that the destiny of nations, the near future of the world does depend upon the most trivial incident which may happen to disturb the brain or nerves of one or two irresponsible and impulsive persons. As Pope says—

Who first taught souls enslaved, and realms undone,
The enormous faith of many, made for one ?

It is too true that the welfare of the many, and much that civilization has achieved, lie at the mercy of war ; but this is just because the civilization is only partial and skin deep. War is, as of old, a weapon of offence in the barbaric armoury, and a weapon of defence in the hand of civilization ; and civilization is not yet in the ascendant, the barbaric element yet reigns and governs. That is, nations are at different stages of progress ; they have rival interests, they inherit old grudges, they are under the influence of needs and greeds which will not be restrained ; and so it must be acknowledged that a cloud much bigger than a man's hand is visible, even now, upon the horizon, and may be the precursor of a tempest, the final consequences of which no one can foresee ; but when it has passed away, and the sky is once more clear, the time may have arrived when the artist from New Zealand, upon the last arch of London Bridge, may be sketching the ruins of St. Paul's.

We are obliged to admit that progress is liable to be interrupted and is jeopardized by war. It was not as the result of war only that Rome was brought to ruin ; it was her internal state also that conduced to it. Is the internal condition of modern communities quite safe and satisfactory ? Let us consult Thomas Carlyle again. Referring to an experience in Ireland, he says :—“ The furniture of this caravanserai consisted of a large iron pot, two oaken tables, two benches, two chairs, and a potheen noggin. There was a loft above (attainable by a ladder) upon which the inmates slept ; and the space below was divided by a hurdle into two apartments, the one for their cow and pig, and the other for themselves and guests. On entering the house we discovered the family, eleven in number, at dinner ; the father sitting at the top, the mother at the bottom, the children on each side, of a large oaken board, which was scooped out in

the middle, like a trough, to receive the contents of their pot of potatoes. Little holes were cut at equal distances to contain salt, and a bowl of milk stood on the table: all the luxuries of meat and beer, bread, knives, and dishes, were dispensed with. The poor slave himself our traveller found, as he says, broad-backed, of great personal strength, and mouth from ear to ear. His wife was a sun-browned, but well-featured woman, and his young ones, bare and chubby, had the appetite of ravens. Of their philosophical or religious tenets or observances no notice or hint."

If the few men dining with Macaulay at the West End of London were civilization, into what category of men are we to put this peasant and his family? There is some human colouring in Carlyle's picture—he could have painted one in darker and more tragic hues—and the question is, how many of such persons are there in a community, and what proportion do they bear to their more favoured brethren? furthermore, are they content with their lot, or is it desirable they should be? In these days they are certainly not content, for they are told it is the fault of society that their lot is so low, and that they ought always to have both work and wages, that when regular employers of labour have no work for them, or none that is acceptable, the State should forthwith provide it and pay them such wages as they require. As a normal condition of things this is a sheer impossibility; the State is only another name for the community, and the State possesses only what it derives from the community. Upon an emergency, and as an act of kindness, the community may and should stand in the gap, and should provide a shield against the accidents of life; but this is not what we call business; it adds nothing to the public resources, but exhausts them; and we are now considering how Carlyle's hero and his fellows are, by self-help, and in the ordinary course of things, to put themselves on a better footing. Roughly speaking, the

revenues of society reach the pockets of the people either in the form of wages or profits, and it is only possible to keep the stream of wages flowing while profits flow along with it. That portion of the community dependent upon profits which do not come have surely as much claim upon the State for assistance—if it could give it—as those who depend upon wages; they might both be helped under abnormal circumstances, but when production has become finally profitless it must be abandoned and wages must cease. The State cannot provide necessaries of life for a community beyond the amount which it levies in taxes, and taxes must ultimately be paid out of some surplus; and when this does not exist the State itself must become bankrupt. Economic laws are not mere conventions which can be set aside when they are not liked; they are deductions from experience, founded upon facts of nature and human nature and, like other facts, these are rather stubborn things. If society constitutes itself without regarding them, so much the worse for society. Society is an aggregate of individuals, and what does not exist in the individuals cannot exist in the aggregate; if the individuals, or any large portion of them, directly or indirectly consume more than they produce, abstract more from the common stock than they bring to it, the aggregate, the community will certainly be poor, after the fashion of Carlyle's hero, and no manipulation of State help can prevent it.

Professor Huxley, who is a sound judging man, looking at public affairs, only a few days ago, wrote as follows:—“The latter years of the century promise to see us embarked in an industrial warfare of far more serious import than the military wars of its opening years.” Another writer, and one who is hardly less eminent, in a work published this year, says—“Profits in nearly all trades are diminishing, and will probably diminish still more. Hitherto capitalists have been the chief sufferers, but it cannot be long before the workmen will have their turn

of loss in the form of decreased wages. At the present rate of decline, a point will before long be reached when the employer will get little or no return for his capital, and when the workman will be able to get no adequate wages for his labour." There is not much promise of progress in these forecasts; and there is no quack remedy or Morrison's pill which can remove such symptoms. Society exists for the service of man, and when a particular society ceases to promote that service, when its government does not discern the signs of the times, or when ideas are dominant in the public mind which are at war with experience and fact, then the days of adversity are near for such a society, and the tide of civilization, which once brought it prosperity and plenty, may recede from its shores, and carry its fertilizing influences to other lands.

Professor Mahaffy, in his "Lectures on Primitive Civilization," already referred to, whilst speaking hopefully of the future is not free from doubt. He says—"Surely the human race has been and is advancing. I know the very subjects we have discussed to-day have led many to doubt it. The mighty kings of Egypt and of Babylon thought their civilization permanent, and built great monuments wherewith they desired to equal the glory of a far-removed posterity; and yet all this greatness had no power to withstand disintegration. The sand of the desert has not been able to cover their material structures, but the darkest ignorance has long since crushed out the last spark of civilization in the minds of their people. The intellectual and even moral splendour of Greece and Rome seemed destined at one time to leaven the whole world, and to raise it to a higher stage; and yet the day came when the grasp of civilization was again relaxed in death, and knowledge found her tomb in the dark ages. Who knows whether even the boasted culture of the present time has not within itself the seeds of decay, whether the poison of

Communism will not infect its system and cause it some day to become paralysed and collapse?"

Such a speculation as this reminds us again that civilization is something more than the externals of a State; that it does not necessarily die with the State; and also that the great world does not depend for its progress upon the continuance of any single State. No darker event ever happened in the history of the world than the breaking up of the Roman Empire: it was the work of centuries to re-constitute the disorganized mass, and the old order was never again restored. But at this day there are great European Powers—the offspring of old Rome—which designate themselves Latin States, and the old Latin tongue re-appears in the speech of France, Spain, and Italy, while the Roman law has left its mark upon the legislation of the world. The fabric of a State may become a heap of ruins, but vital elements may survive, which spring up again in new circumstances and places.

There is another aspect of the subject which has hardly been adverted to, but which as it colours the whole, should not be overlooked. The late Professor Green, of Oxford, in one of his recently published works, says:—"There is a view of the history of mankind, by this time familiarized to Englishmen, which detaches from the chaos of events a connected series of ruling actions and beliefs, the achievements of great men and great epochs, and assigns to these in a special sense the term historical. According to this theory—which, indeed, if there is to be a theory of history at all, alone gives the needful simplification—the mass of nations must be regarded as left in swamps and shallows outside the main stream of human development. They have either never come within the reach of hopes and institutions which make history a progress instead of a cycle, or they have stiffened these into a dead body of ceremony and caste, or at some great epoch they have failed to discern the

signs of the times, and rejected the counsel of God against themselves. Thus permanently, or for generations, with no principle of motion but unsatisfied want, without the assimilative ideas which, from the strife of passions, elicit moral truth, they have trodden the old round of war, trade, and faction, adding nothing to the spiritual heritage of man. The historian need not trouble himself with them, except so far as relation to them determines the activity of progressive nations." There are figurative expressions here which may be open to criticism, but the general theorem is unimpeachable. Progress—it may be said—is the growth of ideas serviceable to man; such ideas are not inappropriately styled his "spiritual heritage," and, unlike his material heritage, they do not fall into decay.

The Poet Laureate has condensed the philosophy of the subject into a few of the inimitable stanzas of *In Memoriam*. He says—

Contemplate all this work of Time,
 The giant labouring in his youth;
 Nor dream of human love and truth,
 As dying Nature's earth and lime;
 But trust that those we call the dead
 Are breathers of an ampler day
 For ever nobler ends. They say,
 The solid earth whereon we tread
 In tracts of fluent heat began,
 And grew to seeming-random forms,
 The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
 Till at the last arose the man;
 Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,
 The herald of a higher race,
 And of himself in higher place,
 If so he type this work of time
 Within himself, from more to more;
 Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
 Like glories, move his course, and show
 That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd with the shocks of doom
To shape and use. Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast ;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

ON THE LAW OF VALUE.

*Notes on a Paper recently read before the Warrington Literary
and Philosophical Society.*

I AGREE with the writer of the paper on the Law of Value, that it is a subject which should be clearly understood by everyone who would become acquainted with political economy. I thought I knew some little about it; but after perusal of the paper in question, I came to the conclusion that I either misunderstood the subject or misunderstood part of the writer's argument. I read the comments in the local papers, and I thought the writers of them also mistook the meaning of the question and misinterpreted it. I spoke to one or two persons who had been present, and they seemed to me to have got an erroneous notion of what the real point at issue was. I therefore looked at the subject again, and thought that, whilst the writer had made a good confession of faith, he accompanied it with some questionable statements, which needed rectification before the subject could be fairly understood. It is not easy to put oneself at the point of view of another man and see the difficulties of a subject as they are presented to him. Abstract discussion is peculiarly difficult to follow, and a man who accustoms himself to deal with it employs general words which habit has made familiar to him, but which a hearer finds it hard to follow; and the abstract terms of political economy are peculiarly affected by this circumstance. A writer, therefore, who does not, as he goes along, translate them into concrete facts is very apt to become obscure; and it is further possible that he may be

himself misled by a misapplication of the very words, which he well understands, but which he allows himself to use now and then without the necessary care. Referring to this subject, Dr. Whately, in his "Logic" says:—"Ricardo appears to set out by admitting Adam Smith's definition of value in exchange. But in the greater part of his 'Principles of Political Economy' he uses the word as synonymous with cost, and by this one ambiguity he has rendered his great work a long enigma." Where so eminent a man as Ricardo has laid himself open to such a criticism, it is evident that lesser men must either be supremely careful or be very liable to fall into mistakes, and therefore I thought that a re-discussion of the subject would be useful, as I am quite satisfied from what I have read and heard that some of our members and some of our public writers have failed to grasp the real meaning of the subject.

The first question that presents itself is, What are the objects or things which are affected by the law of value? The answer is, Such objects and things as are in themselves desirable and are only attainable by effort. I think if we steadily keep in view these two points, we shall come to a clear and correct notion of what we mean by value, or, as I shall call it, exchange-value. It is most important to use this compound word; for if we do not, we are in danger of sliding into the other notion of value which Adam Smith calls "value in use."

In the paper we are considering are the following propositions.

"Value is a quality essentially *external* to the article of which it is predicated. It is a quality which is purely relative."

"Value is not even price;" and yet in the next page the money value of a hat is said to be £1. Now surely money value is *price*—indeed, on the following page, price is said to mean *money value*.

Definitions of value show in what senses the word is

used, and the *usus loquendi* is, after all, that which fixes the meaning of a word. There are two questions before us, the one as to the meaning of a word, and the other as to the exact thing or relation intended by the word. A man writing a treatise is of course at liberty to annex to a word that particular shade of meaning which suits him best, and all that can be asked of him is that he should announce it and adhere to it. Ricardo defines value according to his notion of it; and the only question is whether his exposition is of a piece with his definition. We have no Academy or authority which can give laws on this subject, the *usus loquendi* is the law, and the usage of the best writers. The meaning of words is conventional, not inherent; and yet they have a meaning dependent upon usage, situation and circumstance. Our language is derived from several sources. The word *value* comes to us from the Latin, and another word, nearly its exact equivalent, from the Saxon—the word *worth*; and in the paper before us the word *value* is introduced where it is usual to employ the word *worth*. The proverb “the worth of a thing is what it will bring,” is quoted as “the value of a thing is what it will fetch in the market.” Now the word *worth* always had, and still now has, reference to the qualities of the thing to which it was applied. The word *worship* is derived from it, and was originally the abstract worthship; worthy and worthiness are also derived from it. It was customary in olden times for a candidate to address his constituents as the worthy and independent electors, meaning, no doubt, that they were worthy of him, and he of them. Well, these words all imply qualities as possessed by the person to whom they are applied; and they have passed from this application, perhaps unfortunately, to the wealth or property which a man has; for he is said to be *worth* so much, and we might express this otherwise, by saying that the *value* of his property is so much, so that value and worth are used indiscriminately to express the same notion.

I will draw one or two examples of this from a book, which, whatever else it is, may be called, as Chaucer's works have been, "a well of English undefiled." I mean the Bible. The earliest record we have in the Bible of a formal sale and purchase is that which describes Abram's purchase from Ephron of a piece of land; and Abram's request is, that Ephron will give it him for as much money as it is worth, and Ephron replies the land is worth 400 shekels of silver, which is just equivalent to saying the value of it is 400 shekels of silver. Coming down to a later time, and to a very different transaction, we have Ahab desiring to obtain the vineyard of Naboth; and he says, "I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it, or if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money." The expression "value of it in money" is an exact equivalent of this. Now let us turn to the poetical book of Job, and see how the same ideas are expressed there. Of wisdom, Job says, "It cannot be gotten for gold, neither can silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or with the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it, and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral or of pearls, for the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold." Then Job speaks of "physicians of no value."

Value and worth are in the same category, and the comparison made between wisdom and precious stones is that one is of greater worth than the other. It is the capacity of yielding results more serviceable to the possessor which is in question. The relation predicated is that of equality; the things are not equal, one is of more worth than the other. Now, instead of being external to the thing of which it is predicated, as is asserted in the paper before us, worth is the sum and substance of its qualities. The jewels enumerated by

Job have the value or worth which is implied in their being objects of desire. Value is the worth of something expressed in the denomination of something else. In the book of Leviticus it is said, "If the man be poorer than thy estimation, then he shall present himself before the priest and the priest shall value him,"—that is, he shall take account of his property and qualifications—estimate them. Here again is another word belonging to the same subject implying qualities—estimation. The man is to be valued or estimated according to his worth.

If, then, worth and value are in fact practically synonymous terms, it must be an error to say, "Value is a quality essentially external to the thing of which it is predicated;" for worth is a quality essentially inherent in the thing of which it is predicated. Different estimates may be formed of the worth of a thing; but, whatever the estimate may be, it is founded upon qualities inherent in the thing. But then it is added, "Value is a quality which is purely relative"—granted. Husband is a word purely relative, but it is grounded upon a fact inherent for the time being in every man who has a wife. Relative terms always occur in pairs, but they are founded upon facts which constitute the relation. The relation is not one thing and the facts another. The fact that a thing possesses certain qualities constitutes its value or worth; which is otherwise expressed by saying that a thing which possesses certain qualities is desirable, and has this further quality that it can be exchanged for some other thing possessing qualities of another sort, but equally desirable. In the old English ballad of King John and the Abbot of Canterbury are the two following stanzas:—

And first quoth the King, when I'm in this stead
With my crown of gold so fair on my head,
Among all my liege men so noble of birth,
Thou must tell me to one penny what I am worth.

To which the Abbot's reply is:—

For thirty pence our Saviour was sold,
 Among the false Jews as I have been told
 And twenty-nine is the worth of thee,
 For I think thou art one penny worsè than he.

So much for the general notion contained in the word value. It is a word that now belongs to the English language, and English writers have annexed to it a meaning which any man is at liberty to modify; but in doing so he may run the risk of being misunderstood, and he will run the further risk of not covering all the meaning included in the word.

The paper we are considering proceeds thus:—"Can it be said that everything which is capable of being exchanged has value? No. Water can be exchanged, yet though water has frequently value, as the householder in most towns must be quite aware when the collector calls for the water rate; yet in lakes and rivers, and the sea, water can usually be had for the taking, and is not thus in these circumstances the subject of value."

"If a thing without alteration of its nature, is in some circumstances of value and in others not, it is clear that value is not an inherent quality.

"We speak of flint being hard, of iron being malleable; and these qualities of hardness and malleability are understood to be inherent qualities of flint and iron respectively. We say the diamond is hard, and we know hardness is an inherent quality of the diamond; we also say diamonds are valuable, but value is not an inherent quality. If diamonds were as common as sand on the sea shore, they would cease to have value, but they would not lose their inherent quality of hardness. A gold sovereign is of some value in this country, and over a great part of the world; but if we land on a savage island, where the natives know nothing of gold, the purchasing power of a hatful of sovereigns may be found in the altered

circumstances practically *nil*: you would probably get more for a hatful of glass beads."

I have made this long extract because I think it needs rectification. It is said, "If a thing without alteration of its nature is in some circumstances of value and in others not, it is clear that value is not an inherent quality. Hardness and malleability are understood to be inherent qualities of flint and iron respectively." Let us test this assertion. Malleability is a quality of some iron, but only at a certain temperature; raise the temperature and it ceases to be malleable. What, then, becomes of the inherent quality? All the iron daily manufactured in our forges, is, during part of the process, not malleable; it is a mere question of conditions; alter the conditions and the quality of iron is different. Again, flints are powdered and made into paste; and whilst our earth was in a molten state, both the iron and the flint would be known by qualities very different from those by which they are now known. A diamond too, though hard enough at ordinary temperatures, is combustible, and is then deprived of its hardness; its properties, like those of flint and iron, are dependent upon the conditions under which it is placed. And this is by no means a quibble; it is a universal law. All things are what they are by reason of the conditions in which they are placed. Mercury in England is fluid, and may be poured from vessel to vessel; at the North Pole it is solid; which is its inherent quality? Instances of this kind might be multiplied without limit. A column of mercury stands at 30 inches upon the sea shore, but take the tube which contains it to the top of Mont Blanc, and it will be found to have fallen 15 inches: the conditions are altered, but the nature of the thing is unchanged. A person holding a stone weighing 5 lbs. at the end of a string exerts a force sufficient to balance 5 lbs. weight; if he immerses the stone in a bucket of water, without allowing it to touch the bottom, it would

lose 2 lbs. of its weight. The results of weighing in air and in water are different, and yet the thing weighed is the same. This principle prevails everywhere. The qualities of things fluctuate according to the conditions under which they are placed.

The exchange-value of a hatful of sovereigns is not destroyed because a set of savages prefer glass beads; the serviceableness of the sovereigns is intrinsic, and will come into operation when the conditions exist. An English ship lying in the harbour of a savage island has on board a copy of Robinson Crusoe, which possesses exchange-value with reference to the sailors who can read it, though it has none with reference to the savages who cannot. All qualities are relative, not absolute; hardness is as much relative as value.

What are we to say, then, about inherent value, which the inherent qualities of iron, flint and diamond are adduced to disprove? We are obliged to say that we cannot properly assert that these substances have the inherent qualities predicated of them; and I venture to think that the word is misapplied all round, and that we cannot, in fact, ask, without a solecism, whether exchange-value is inherent; but we may say that the special qualities upon which exchange-value is based and grounded are inherent in every article which possesses exchange-value. And now let us ask, what is the precise notion conveyed by the term exchange-value? what is the root and cause of exchange? Why do men barter? and what are the principles that regulate them in doing so? Exchange-value evidently implies desirableness and difficulty of attainment. This first condition is sometimes called utility; but the word is ambiguous, because a thing may be desirable which many people may think not useful. To possess exchangeable value, therefore, a thing must satisfy some want, must gratify some wish, or serve some purpose of some person. Imagine a thing which no human being desires, which under no circum-

stances can serve any purpose or gratify any wish of any man, woman, or child, and such a thing can never possess exchange-value. On the other hand, in order to possess exchange-value, a thing must require some trouble or effort to obtain; no man will give that which he possesses and which has cost him some sacrifice for what he can get for nothing. The most obvious thing of this kind is the air we breathe, which is supplied to us in such abundance and so easily that it cannot possess exchange-value—we can get as much as we want without any trouble. In order that a thing may possess exchange-value, it must be desirable—somebody must wish to have it, and he must be compelled to make some effort before his wish can be gratified. These are the tap roots from which the great tree of exchange-value springs. Thomas de Quincey illustrates the subject in his own forcible and clear manner in the form of two cases, and he calls the first case Epsilon. A man comes forward with his overture, “Here is a thing I wish you to purchase; it has cost me in labour five guineas, and that is the price I ask.” “Very well,” you reply; “tell me what desire or purpose of mine will the article promote?” Epsilon replies, “Why, as candour is my infirmity, none at all. But what of that? Useful or not, the article embodies five guineas worth of excellent labour.” This man, the candid Epsilon, you dismiss. Then we have case Omicron. “Him succeeds Omicron, who praises your decisive conduct as to the absurd family of Epsilons. ‘That man,’ he observes, ‘is weak—candid but weak; for what was the cost in your eyes, but so much toil to no effect of real service? But that is what no one can say of the article offered by myself; it is serviceable always—nay, often you will acknowledge it to be indispensable.’ ‘What is it?’ you demand. ‘Why, simply then, it is a pound of water, and as good water as ever was tasted.’ The scene lies in England, where water bears no value except under that machinery of costly arrangements

which delivers it as a permanent and guaranteed succession into the very chambers where it is to be used. Omicron, therefore, receives permission to follow the candid Epsilon. Each has offered for sale one element of value out of two, one element in a state of insulation, where it was indispensable for any operative value, *i.e.* price, to offer the two in combination; and without such combination it is impossible that exchange-value, under the most romantic or imaginary circumstances, ever could be realized."

There are two elements, then, that are necessary to constitute exchange-value: the one is that an object is serviceable or desirable, and the other that it is in some degree difficult of attainment. With these two keys I think we may unlock all the problems of political economy that have reference to exchange-value.

In the paper we are considering it is said, "If diamonds were as common as sand on the sea shore, they would cease to have value." This is clearly not so. Their exchange-value would be less than it is now, by reason of their greater abundance; but a substance so hard and clean might make good macadam or good garden walks, or it might serve a thousand purposes useful to man. The shingle on the sea shore at Brighton is sold for the purpose of making a sort of gravel walks, and I dare say diamonds would do quite as well. In this case we see the operation of one of the elements of exchange-value: the difficulty of obtaining an object is removed and it falls in exchange-value; less labour is required to obtain it, and therefore less labour will be given for it. We must bear in mind that the facts of political economy do not impinge upon all parts of the world with an equal pressure, they vary with circumstances. In a hot climate, where nature is bountiful and supplies what men want with very little labour, certain things needful in a cold climate are not wanted. Thus an article has value in one place and not in another, for exchange-value is founded upon the wants

of mankind and upon the other fact that those wants cannot be supplied except by some effort. We may turn the question round as we please, and express it in the most abstract terms; but we must come back at last to the hard facts which govern the world; men can only get what they want by effort, and their wants are illimitable, although the poet says,—

Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long.

Whatever, then, ministers to the wants of man, whatever makes his life more pleasant and agreeable he would fain possess himself of; and as he can only succeed in doing this by producing it himself or procuring it from somebody else, this state of things gives rise to the working or the bargaining which creates exchange-value. Looked at in this light the question does not seem a difficult one; it has other phases, but this is the principal and primary one. Civilized life is a very complex machine: there are, as we say, wheels within wheels, and there is such a stir and movement around us, that it is very difficult to analyze what is going on, or to get an intelligent view of it. The operations of trade are specially intricate because they are carried on by a sort of shorthand: every operation is abbreviated and condensed until a looker on can hardly make out or understand it. It takes a good deal of explaining and disentangling in order to trace the single threads that make up the great and varied web which we look at with such wonder, and this question of exchange-value has become complicated by the multitudinous shapes which it has assumed and confused description of them; but if we lay hold of a governing principle, growing out of the primitive facts, we may follow it without difficulty.

The Paper we are considering says:—"Labour is not the origin and cause of value;" and the answer is, Labour creates the largest quantity of the things that possess

exchange-value. Often some desirable object may be obtained gratuitously;—stoop, and you gather it at your feet; but, still, because the continued iteration of this stooping exacts a laborious effort, very soon it is found that to gather for yourself virtually is not gratuitous. In the vast forests of the Canadas, at intervals, wild strawberries might be gratuitously gathered by ship loads: yet such is the exhaustion of a stooping posture, and of a labour so monotonous, that everybody is soon glad to resign the service into mercenary hands. Effort is the word that expresses what is necessary to obtain whatever is desired, where it is not provided in such abundance as the air of heaven; and effort is only another word for labour; therefore, as has been said before, and it cannot be too plainly stated, labour is one of the two pillars upon which rests the fabric of exchange-value. It is one of the causes of exchange-value, and exactly in proportion as you lessen the quantity of labour necessary for the production of an article, do you lower its exchange-value. If a yard of cotton, or a pair of stockings, or a yard of cloth, are of less exchange-value than they were fifty years ago, it is because they are produced by less labour; this is the sole cause of their diminished exchange-value. To put it into other words, whatever man wants at the meridian of England, which is of less exchange-value now than it was formerly, has been reduced in exchange-value in consequence of less labour being necessary for its production.

I must not detain you too long on this part of the subject, but as it involves the seminal principles of exchange-value, and as it is impossible to get at the bottom of it without clear ideas on the point, I will follow it a little further at the risk of some repetition, and I shall avail myself of the language and illustrations of De Quincey, because I know of none which are at once so keen and forcible, or of so popular a character. In any exchange-value whatsoever, as he points out, it

has been agreed by all parties, that desirableness, and, for shortness, let us say difficulty of attainment—or in one word difficulty—must be present: there must be a real utility or serviceableness before a man will submit to be affected by difficulty, *i.e.*, before he will pay a price adjusted to difficulty of attainment; and *vice versâ*, there must be this real difficulty of attainment before the simple fact of utility in the object will dispose him to pay for it. Now, though this is indispensable, yet whilst both alike are present, one only governs. And a capital error has been made in fancying that value in use is necessarily opposed to value in exchange; whereas, being one horn of the two into which value in exchange divides, as often as the value in use becomes operative at all, it does itself become, it constitutes value in exchange, and is no longer co-ordinate to exchange-value (in which case it is wealth) but is subordinate—one subdivision of exchange-value. No man ever conceived the intention of buying upon any consideration of the difficulty and expense which attend the production of an article. He wishes to possess, he resolves to buy, not on account of these obstacles—far from it—but in spite of them. What acts as the positive and sole attraction to him is the intrinsic serviceableness of the article towards some purpose of his own. The other element may happen to affect the price, and, generally speaking, *does* affect it as the sole regulating force, but it can never enter at all into the original motive for seeking to possess an article; uniformly it acts as an impediment, a pure resistance to that desire. Here, then, present themselves two real designations for supplanting the two words desire and difficulty by two others, which are better, as being, first, in true logical opposition; and, second, as pointing severally each to its own origin and nature. Desire may be called affirmative value, and difficulty, negative. The latter represents the whole resistance to your possession of the commodity concerned. The

former represents the whole benefit, the whole positive advantage, the whole power accruing to you from possession of this commodity. There is always an affirmative value, there is always a negative value, on any commodity bearing an exchange value;—that is to say, on any which can enter a market; but only one of these values takes effect at a time—under certain circumstances, the affirmative value; under other and more ordinary circumstances, the negative. Affirmative value is that which operates to create a desire for an object. Negative value is the obstacle which intervenes between the desire and the accomplishment of it; it is the resistance of circumstances by which we are prevented from immediately obtaining that which we wish, and are therefore induced to negotiate for it by the process of exchange.

The general principle which governs transition under appropriate circumstances from negative to affirmative value, may be explained by a political case drawn from the civil administration of ancient Rome. Any foreigner, coming to Rome before the democratic basis of that republic had given way, would have found some difficulty (when reviewing the history of Rome) in accounting for the principles which had governed the award of triumphs. “I am at a loss,” he would say, “to reconcile the rule which in some instances appears to have prevailed with that which must have prevailed at others. In one case I see a rich province overrun, and no triumph granted to the conqueror; in another, I see a very beggarly (perhaps even a mutinous and unmanageable) province—no source of strength, but rather of continual anxiety to Rome—made the occasion of a most brilliant triumph, and even of a family title, such as ‘Macedonicus’ or ‘Isauricus,’ the most gratifying personal distinction which Rome had to confer.” These would seem a contradiction; but the answer could dispel it. We regard, it would be said, on behalf of Rome, two separate and alternate considerations. No province,

whether poor or rich, has ever been annexed to our republic which had not this primary condition of value—that it tended to complete our arch of empire. By mere locality, as one link in a chain, it has tended to the *arrondissement* of our dominions, the orb within which our power circulates. So far *any* province whatsoever added within the proper Mediterranean circuit had always a claim upon the Republic for some trophy of honour. But to raise this general claim to a level with *triumphal honours*, we Romans required that one or other of these two extra merits should be pleaded:—either, first, that the province, though not rich, had been won by peculiarly hard fighting; or, secondly, that though won with very slight efforts, the province was peculiarly rich. The primary, the indispensable value, as a link in the Roman chain, every province must realize, that tended to complete the zone drawn round the Mediterranean. Even a wilderness of rocks would have that value. But this being presumed, of course, as an advantage given by position without merit in the winner, we required as the crest of the achievement towards justifying a triumph, either the affirmative value of great capacities for taxation, or the negative value of great difficulties overcome in the conquest. Cilicia, for example, returned little in the shape of revenue to Rome; for the population was scanty, and, from the condition of society, wealth was impossible. But the Isaurian guerillas and the Cilician bucaniers occupying for many centuries caves and mountain fortresses, that without gunpowder were almost impregnable, gave a sanguinary interest to the conflict which compensated the small money value. For eight centuries Cilicia was the scourge of the Levant. Palestine again presented even a bloodier contest, though less durable, in a far narrower compass. But Egypt—poor effeminate Egypt! always “a servant of servants”—offered, amidst all her civilization, no shadow of resistance. As a test of military merit, she could not found a claim for any man;

for 600 miles she sank on her knees at the bidding of the Roman Centurion. So far the triumph was nothing. On the other hand, Egypt was by wealth the first of all provinces. She was the greatest of coeval granaries. The province technically called Africa, and the Island of Sicily, were bagatelles by comparison; and what, therefore, she wanted as the negative criterion of merit—having so much wealth—she possessed redundantly in the affirmative criterion. Transalpine Gaul, again, was a fine province under both criteria. She took much beating. In the half-forgotten language of the fancy, she was a “glutton,” and secondly, on the affirmative side, she was also rich. Thus might an ancient Roman have explained and reconciled the apparently conflicting principles upon which triumphs had been awarded. Where a stranger had fancied a want of equitable consistency, because two provinces had been equally bloodless acquisitions, and yet had not equally secured a triumph, he would now be disabused of his error by the sudden explanation that the one promised great wealth, the other little. And where, again, between two provinces equally worthless as regarded positive returns of use, he had failed to understand why one should bring vast honour to the winner, the other none at all, his embarrassment would be relieved at once by showing him that the unhonoured conquest had fallen at the first summons, possibly as a mere effect of reaction from adjacent victories; whilst the other conquest had placed on the record a brilliant success, surmounting a resistance that had baffled a series of commanders, and so far flattering to the Roman pride, but also transcendantly important, as getting rid of an exposure which proclaimed to the world a possibility of hopeful opposition to Rome.

Now, exactly the same principle, transferred to the theory of value in exchange, will explain the two poles on which it revolves. Sometimes you pay for an article on the scale of its use—its use, that is, with regard to your individual purposes. On this principle, you will pay for

A, perhaps twice as much as you would consent to pay for B. The point at which you pause, and would choose to go without B, rather than pay more for it, does not rise more than one-half so high on the scale as the corresponding *ne plus ultra* for A. This is affirmative price. On the other hand, sometimes you pay for an article on the scale of its costliness; *i.e.*, of its resistance to the act of reproduction. This principle is not a direct natural expression of any intrinsic usefulness. It is an indirect expression of value by an alien accident, perfectly impertinent to any interest of yours—not what good it will do to yourself, but what harm it has done to some other man (*viz.*, what quantity of trouble it has imposed upon him); that is the immediate question which this second principle answers. But unnatural (that is artificial) as such a principle seems, still in all civilized countries, this is the principle which takes effect by way of governing force upon price full twenty times for once that the other and natural principle takes effect.

Two illustrations may help us to apply the principles. In the reign of Charles Second occurred the first sale in England of a rhinoceros. The more interesting wild beasts—those distinguished by ferocity, by cruelty and agility, had long been imported from the Mediterranean—and as some of them were “good fellows and would strike” (though generally speaking both the lion and the tiger are the merest curs of nature), they bore tolerable prices, even in the time of Shakespeare. But a rhinoceros had not yet been imported; and, in fact, the brute is a dangerous connection to form. As a great lady from Germany replied some years ago to an Englishman who had offered her an elephant, “By no means,” she said, “him eat too much!” In spite, however, of a similar infirmity, the rhinoceros fetched, under Charles Second, more than £2,000. But why? On what principle? Was it his computed negative value? Not at all. A granite obelisk from Thebes, or a Cleopatra’s needle, though heavy

as a hundred rhinoceroses, would not have cost so much to sling and transport from the Nile to the Thames. But in such a case there are two reasons why the purchaser is not anxious to inquire about the costs. In buying a loaf, that is an important question, because a loaf will be bought every day, and there is great use in knowing the cost or negative value, as that which will assuredly govern an article of daily reproduction. But in buying a rhinoceros, which it is to be hoped that no man will be so ill fated as to do twice in one world, it is scarcely to be hoped that the importer will tell any truth at all, nor is it of much consequence that he should; for the buyer cares little by comparison as to the separate question on the negative price of the brute to his importer. He cares perhaps not very much more as to the separate question upon the affirmative return likely to arise for himself in the case of his exhibiting such a monster. Neither value taken singly was the practical reply to his anxieties. That reply was found in both values taken in combination, the negative balanced against the affirmative. It was less important to hear that the cost had been £1,000, so long as the affirmative return was conjuncturally assigned at a little beyond £2,000, than to hear that the immediate cost to the importer had been £2,000, but with the important assurance that £5,000 at the very least might be almost guaranteed from the public exhibition of so delicate a brute. The creature had not been brought from the Barbary States, the staple market for monsters, but from some part of Africa, round the Cape; so that the cost had been unusually great. But the affirmative value founded in the public curiosity was greater; and when the two terms in the comparison came into collision, then was manifested the excess of affirmative value in that one instance, as measured against the negative. A second rhinoceros was hardly to be expected in the same generation, but for that once it turned out that a moderate fortune might be raised upon such a basis.

One more example. If we were walking with a foreigner in London and purchased, for 1s. 6d., a new copy of "Paradise Lost," our foreign friend might say, "Really it pains me to see you English putting so slight a value upon your great poet as to rate his greatest work no higher than eighteen pence." How should we answer? Perhaps thus,—“My friend, you mistake the matter, the price does not represent the affirmative value. The value derived from the power of the poem to please or to exalt, *that* would be valued by some as infinite, irrepresentable by money; and yet the resistance to its reproduction might be less than the price of a breakfast.” Now here the ordinary law of price exposes itself at once. It is the *power*, the affirmative work, which creates a fund for any price at all; but it is the *resistance*, the negative work, or what we call the cost, which determines how much shall be taken from that potential fund. In bibliographical records there are instances of scholars selling a landed estate equal to an annual livelihood for ever, in order to obtain a copy of one single book, *viz.*, an Aristotle. At this day there are men whose estimate of Aristotle is not at all less. But does any man pay an estate in exchange for Aristotle as now multiplied? The best editions may be got for a few guineas. There is reason for the difference between former purchasers and modern purchasers. The resistance is lowered; the affirmative value may, for anything that is known, be still equal, in many minds, to that which it was in elder days. The fair way to put it to the test would be to restore the elder circumstances. Then the book was a manuscript; printing was an undiscovered art; so that merely the resistance value was much greater, since it would cost much more to overcome that resistance, when the obstacle was so vast a mass of manual labour, than where the corresponding labour in a compositor would multiply, by the pressman's aid, into a thousand copies, and thus divide the cost among a thousand purchasers. But this is not all. The owner of a

manuscript would not suffer it to be copied. He knew the worth of his prize; it had a monopoly value. And what is that? Monopoly value is affirmative value carried to extremity. It is the case where you press to the ultimate limit upon the desire of a bidder to possess the article. It is no longer a question, for how little might it be afforded? You do not suffer him to put that question. You tell him plainly, though he might have it copied for £40, instead of sinking upon the original manuscript a perpetual estate, yielding £40 annually, you will not allow it to be copied. Consequently you draw upon that fund, which, in our days can so rarely be drawn upon, *viz.*, the ultimate esteem for the object; the last bidding a man will offer under the known alternative of losing it.

This alternative rarely exists in our days. It is rarely in the power of any one man to raise such a question. Yet sometimes it is, and the following is a curious illustration of it. In 1812 occurred the famous Roxburghe sale, in commemoration of which a distinguished club was subsequently established in London. It was a library, which formed the subject, and in the series of books stood one which was perfectly unique in affirmative value.

This value was to be the sole force operating on the purchaser; for as to the negative value, estimated on the resistance to the multiplication of copies, it was impossible to assign any: no price would overcome that resistance. The book was the Valdarfer edition of Boccaccio. It contained not all the works of that author, but his "Decameron," and, strange enough, it was not a manuscript but a printed copy. The value of the book lay in these two peculiarities:—First, it was asserted that all subsequent editions had been castrated with regard to those passages which reflected severely on the Papal Church. Secondly, the edition as being incorrigible in that respect, had been so largely destroyed that, not without reason, the Roxburghe copy was believed to be unique. In fact, the book had not been seen during the

two previous centuries; so that it was generally held to be a nonentity. And the biddings went on as they would do for the wandering Jew in case he should suddenly turn up and wish to insure his life. The contest soon rose above the means of little men. It lay between Lord Spencer and Lord Blandford, and was finally knocked down to the latter for £2,240, at a time when five per cent. was obtained readily and everywhere for money. It illustrates the doctrine on which we are now engaged—that the purchaser some two years later, when Duke of Marlborough, and in personal embarrassments, towards which he could draw no relief from plate that was an heirloom, or from estates that were entailed, sold the book to his old competitor Lord Spencer, for 1,000 guineas. Nothing is more variable than the affirmative value of objects which ground it chiefly upon rarity. In this case there was a secondary value—the book was not only rare, but was here found in its integrity; this one copy was perfect; all others were mutilated. But still such a value, being partly a caprice, fluctuates with the feelings or opinions of the individual; and, even when it keeps steady, it is likely to fluctuate with the buyers' fortunes.

On the other hand a value of this sort, with the general countersign of society, fluctuates very little. The great Italian master-pieces of painting have long borne an affirmative value—(*i.e.*, value founded on pre-eminence, not on cost of producing,)—that value pushed to the excess of a monopoly continually growing more intense. It would be useless now to ask after the resistance value, because if it could be ascertained it would be a mere inoperative curiosity. Very possible it is that Leonardo da Vinci may have spent not more than £150 in producing his fresco of the Last Supper. But were it possible to detach it from the walls of the convent refectory which it emblazons, the picture would command in London a king's ransom; and the Sistine Chapel embellishments of

Michael Angelo, probably two such ransoms in a week. Such jewels are absolutely unique—they are secure from repetition; notorious copies would not for a moment enter into competition. It is very doubtful if artists of power so gigantic will re-appear for many centuries; and the sole deduction from their increasing value is the ultimate frailty of their materials.

In the early part of this century two most powerful medicines were introduced into this country, one was sulphate of quinine, and the other croton oil, amongst drastic medicines of a particular class the most potent that is known. Both were understood to be agents of the first rank against inflammatory action, and with respect to the last numerous cases were reported in which it had beyond doubt come in critically to save a patient, previously given up by his medical attendants. Naturally, these cases would be most numerous during the interval requisite for publishing and diffusing the medicine—but this was time enough to allow of a large number of cases in which it had not been introduced until the eleventh hour. Two of such cases are mentioned—one was near to London; a mounted messenger rode in for the medicine; returned within a hundred minutes, and the patient was saved. The other case was at Nottingham; the person despatched with the precious talisman, to the post office, then in Lombard-street, found the mail just starting, and by an inflexible rule neither guard nor coachman were at liberty to receive any parcel not entered in the way-bill—the man had not presence of mind to entrust it with one of the passengers; the patient was already in extremity, and before the medicine reached Nottingham, by a coach leaving London the next morning, he had expired. Now, in the case of such a magical charm, to have or to want, which was a warrant for life or death, it is clear that amongst rich men the holder of the veritable elixir, the man who tendered it in time, might effectually demand an oriental reward. The sort of value of which we are

speaking was well known in ancient times, and even outside this world and its inhabitants; for in the book of Job, Satan is represented in his conference with the Supreme as saying—"Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." And in his extremity, Shakespeare represents Richard III. as exclaiming—"A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!" By such examples as these the distinction is made clear between plus and minus power and resistance value—the two ruling poles towards which all possible or conceivable prices must tend. If a man were to offer you a hunter, master of your weight and otherwise satisfactory, you would readily give him a fair price. But what is a fair price? That which will reproduce such a hunter—his cost—the total resistance to his being offered in this condition. Such is the value, and such the law of value for a hunter; hardly so for a racer. A breeder who has in his stud a horse promising first-rate powers, is no longer content to receive cost price with a fair profit for the horse. The man, who as master of pearl divers sells ordinary pearls at a mere cost, and a fair profit on the day's wages that have earned them, when he finds a pearl fit to embellish the Shah of Persia's crown, looks to become a petty Shah himself. The breeder of the race-horse would take into his estimate the splendid stakes the horse might hereafter win and ask £5,000, although the whole value computed on the resistance might not be more than as many hundreds.

It has been said that water bears little or no exchange-value. A little water in the wrong place may have no value; but enough water in the right place has very great value, not merely as a fishery, but as a bath for swimmers, as a reservoir, as a torrent or water power for turning machinery, as a dock for shipping, as an anchorage for boats, as a canal for transporting great bulks and weights of commodities, water is often incalculable in its exchange-value. In the paper we are considering, because water in lakes, rivers, and the sea can be had for taking, it is said,

under these circumstances, not to be the subject of value; but this is treating water as if it were only used for drinking, whereas its mechanical and carrying purposes may even yet be greatly increased, and the power of the tide may be made to do the work of thousands of steam engines. What is the mechanical force of Niagara? And this may one day be made to possess exchange-value.

Water has the exchange-value of diamonds, and diamonds have the use-value of water. It is not meant that, by possessing use-value, a thing is useful in the sense of being good or salutary. It may have a use-value though if the purposes it accomplishes are monstrous, pernicious, or even destructive to the user; and its price, instead of being only its cost, is founded on its power to realize this purpose. From the Greek word for a purpose or final cause we have the word *teleologic*, to denote that quality in any subject by which it tends towards a purpose or is referred to a purpose. On this principle all value in use is teleologic value—value derived from the purpose the article contemplates; whilst then “the useful” is out of place in political economy, the use of any article in the sense of its purposes, as furnishing the grounds for its value or price is most material; and for this reason, because the purpose which any article answers, and the cost which it imposes, must eternally form the two limits within which the tennis ball of price flies backward and forward. A genuine picture of Da Vinci or Raphael sells always on the principle of value in use or teleologic value,—an enlightened sensibility to the finest effect of art. This constitutes the purpose or teleologic function to which the appreciation is referred.

I have detained you longer than I intended, but a theory of value should explain all the circumstances that can be affected by it, and there is one circumstance which has throughout been assumed, but which should be stated explicitly—all exchange-value implies that the law of property and ownership exists; unless a man's right to

the possession of what he has, or can acquire, be acknowledged, all reasoning is at an end. This is an answer to a remark in the paper before us—wherein it is asserted that many things have value upon which no labour has been bestowed, and seams of coal in the bowels of the earth are adduced to prove it; but this is just because the law has created ownership in minerals. Where there is no such law, no one would give anything for the right of getting coal which can be got without paying for such right. A building site is then referred to as bearing an enormous value. Here again the law of property comes in, and the law of affirmative value by which an article serves a purpose, viz., the purpose of furnishing the best place for securing customers. The stately oak is then named: here, again, is property which has affirmative value—the power of serving a purpose, and this constitutes its exchange-value. Again, it is said a struggling artist may expend a year's labour in painting a picture; but if he can find no one to buy it where is its value? Here is the case Epsilon formerly referred to: there is no desire to possess the man's picture—the value in use, affirmative value, is wanting; and the same applies to the poem of which no one will buy a copy. There is no affirmative value, no value in use—the thing is worthless; and value in exchange is founded upon worth. The useless machine is open to the same criticism, for labour is not a philosopher's stone unless it turns its materials into gold, or into something which has exchange-value. The Wedgwood vase, which cost originally twenty or thirty guineas, and sold for £735, had the teleologic purpose of giving pleasure, which was the cause of its exchange-value. Without following the examples further, it may be said that the principles laid down can account for all the cases produced; and whilst, as I said before, it is dangerous to propound on such a subject the major proposition of a syllogism, we can hardly be wrong, at the close of this lengthened discussion, in asserting that what-

ever can be appropriated and transferred and is also an object of desire, and can only be attained by effort possesses exchange-value. Effort means labour, and the quantity of effort or labour necessary to produce an object is what controls and governs its exchange-value.

And here we approach another part of the subject. Our inquiry has hitherto been, *How*, and not *How much*?—how it comes to pass that an article possesses exchange-value—not how it comes to possess this particular exchange-value. The latter is a question that has to be dealt with under the law of supply and demand: the former under the more comprehensive law which gives birth to supply and demand. The law of supply and demand may tell us why, at a particular time and place, one article is exchanged for a certain quantity of another article; but it will not tell us what is the root of the operation, what is the wellspring from which it flows. We are told in the paper we are considering, “The popular saying that the value of a thing is what it will fetch in the market, or, in other words, what it will exchange for, gives a perfectly accurate idea of the force of the word value as used in economic science.” This may be demurred to: it answers the question, *How much*; but not the question, *How*? It tells us that the value of a thing is a certain quantity, viz., what it will bring. That is not exactly what we want to know. Our question is an antecedent one—How does it come to pass that it will bring or fetch anything? What is the quality, or what are the qualities and causes, by which it commands some other thing? Now, these qualities, we say, are three:—1st, it must be a thing which can be and is appropriated and transferred; 2nd, it must answer some purpose which men desire to gratify; and, 3rd, it must only be attainable by effort.

This threefold cord constitutes exchange-value, and is, I think, strong enough to bind together any phenomena to which it can be applied; and if so we cannot accept the

statement in the paper before us, "that the operation of demand and supply is in reality the cause and law of value." Demand and supply may alter the ratios, but they do not create the reason;—for the reason why any article whatever possesses that sort of artificial value called exchange-value, is 1st, that it offers itself as a means to some desirable end; and, 2nd, that, possessing incontestably this preliminary advantage, it cannot, at the time when the transfer is effected, be obtained gratuitously and without effort.

For one moment let us get rid of the idea of property. Let us imagine a state of communism, where every man's labour is thrown into a common stock, and each man is provided for impartially out of that common stock; what he produces having no reference to what he receives. Exchange-value is not possible under such circumstances; nor, again, is exchange-value feasible among things which no man desires to possess—be they pictures, poems or machines. Neither is it practicable amongst things which nature provides in such abundance that they can be had without toil and without effort. Exchange-value, then, has its origin in the constitution of the earth and of man. The earth contains all such things as are necessary for the sustenance and comfort of man, and man has an insatiable desire to possess himself of them, and to do this he must submit to the conditions. He must work. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," is the primeval law. "Thorns and briars shall the earth bring forth unto thee," is the other law. The earth, therefore, must be "subdued" and cultivated before it will satisfy the inexhaustible desires of man. On the one hand are the materials, on the other the desire and the power. Combine the two, and you cover the earth with plenty; establish the right of property, and then each man will bring to market the products he desires to exchange. In what proportions this will be done depends upon the quantity of labour required in their production, subject to

such irregularities as arise from the blunders by which too much or too little is produced ; and in this school is learnt the law of supply and demand. But with this we are not immediately concerned. This much, however, we may say, that as more skilful processes are introduced, as machinery comes into play, and as science unfolds her treasures, the exchange-value of most manufactured articles is reduced and the reward of labour is proportionately increased. This fact is written as with a sunbeam in the history of our own country. Our middle class now are richer in comfort than the highest class of 500 years ago ; and all classes, where they are prudent, are better off, have more abundance and variety open to them, than their predecessors of 500 years ago.

The problem then being, How are the necessaries and comforts of life to be procured ? the answer is, By means of labour. The processes of nature and the fertility of soils must be understood and manipulated ; and as the division of labour increases production, so it leads to exchange, and the standard of worth, which each man applies to the products of his industry, is the effort or sacrifice which they have entailed upon him. He must estimate them at this rate, for there is no other which he can adopt. If he has made a rude bow, while another man makes a rude spade, the one will naturally exchange for the other ; and this simplest operation supplies the law that regulates exchange-value everywhere. The quantity of labour, *with reference to articles produced by labour*, determines their exchange-value. Labour is a generic term comprising all sorts of skill and effort. Every one knows that new machinery supersedes old, because the new machinery, at a less expenditure, makes a larger return ; but men fall into errors and mistakes, and manufacture what is not wanted or more than is wanted, and they discover this when they attempt to sell, and then comes in the law of supply and demand to correct the aberrations they have made. The law of supply and

demand creates market-value, which is to natural or normal value what the regulator of a watch is to the mainspring. That which creates movement and value is the mainspring,—the nature of man—his desires and wants. But as these, in their action, are evermore variable, either through excess or defect, the conditions of mercantile life—summed up in the words, supply and demand—interpose as a regulator, now checking the rapidity of movement, and now giving to it a new impetus. Market price is the stern teacher whose lessons cannot be disregarded; if a man manufacture more than the world wants he does not obtain his cost of production; but it is quite evident that he neither will nor can continue to manufacture on these terms. Transgress the law of supply and demand, and the penalty at last is bankruptcy; but so long as you keep within the true limits of normal value and get back the equivalent of what you have expended, you are safe. Market-value modifies normal value, for it is quite plain there is a normal value under the law we have laid down. Market-value is the particular value dependent upon accidental circumstances; normal value is the primary universal and fundamental fact to which all exchange-value seeks to conform; and normal value means, shortly, the cost of production; for no man can possibly continue to produce unless he obtains the cost of production; and competition, where it exists, will not allow him for any length of time to obtain much more, including, of course, the natural increment of profit which prevails. The law of supply and demand is the law of present price, as it is affected by the variations up or down, occasioned by the irregularity of producers. So long as they produce the thing that is wanted, what satisfies some desire or purpose, the world is willing to pay them for it, the normal or natural value, viz., that which covers cost of production, because in the long run they cannot get it for less. The law of gravity is not more certain than this, that if a man's incomings are constantly less than his outgoings, he is

on the highway to bankruptcy. Therefore, when market-value coincides with normal value, the conditions of production are satisfied; when they do not coincide, circumstances perpetually tend to bring about an equilibrium. But an equilibrium between what? Between, as I venture to say, market-value governed by supply and demand and normal value governed by cost of production.

JESUS OF NAZARETH AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

“FOR men to be tied and led by authority, as it were with a kind of captivity of judgment, and though there be reason to the contrary not to listen unto it, but to follow like beasts the first in the herd, they know not nor care not whither—this were brutish. Again, that authority of men should prevail with men, either above or against Reason, is no part of our belief. Companies of learned men, be they never so great and reverend, are to yield unto Reason; the weight whereof is no whit prejudiced by the simplicity of his person which doth allege it, but being found to be sound and good, the bare opinion of men to the contrary must of necessity stoop and give place.”—RICHARD HOOKER, “Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity,” Book ii., ch. vii., 6.

“WHY even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?” (Luke xii. 57.) This is the stern question put by Jesus of Nazareth to certain hypocritical persons who were addicted to slight and superficial methods of enquiry, and who neglected the means and instruments of rational investigation. They took notice of outward things, but did not penetrate to inward causes. Their notions of what was right may have been founded upon mere prejudice; evidently they were not the product of judgment. “Why even of yourselves judge ye not?” Why are you satisfied with any outside husk which has come in your way? Questions like this are not asked in these days; rather is it thought a respectable and proper thing to “follow a multitude,” not one of whom may have taken the trouble to judge what is right; and it is even

regarded as a reprehensible thing to judge anything to be right which is without the sanction of certain special authorities.

What is it that we mean by judging? Is it simply approving what is current? Is it just assenting to particular dogmas because others do so? Or is it not, rather, the asking why they assent, and whether they do so upon grounds which are reasonably convincing? And as we all come of a fallible stock, is it not implied in the very act of judging that we may go wrong? And are we, therefore, dispensed from judging? May we, on this account, abandon the attempt to judge what is right? *Can* we at all abandon it? If we should determine to do so, and to accept the judgment of some one else—Pope or Council—we have already committed ourselves to the judgment that this particular way is right.

We cannot abdicate the function of judging, though we may exercise it in a blind and perfunctory manner. But then we are told that Creeds and Articles are matters too deep and recondite for the lay intellect, and that the vast apparatus of learning and enlightenment possessed by the clergy is alone sufficient for the explication of these mysterious formulas. And how is this proposition to be made evident? How are we to know that it is right and true? “Why even of yourselves judge ye not?”

At the risk, therefore, of being wrong, we must do our best to judge what is right, “esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” (Heb. xi. 26.) We take upon ourselves the burden he laid on us; and it is better that we should bear it and stumble under it, even to falling, rather than slavishly attach ourselves to “the fleshpots of Egypt.” To judge, is to try—to examine—to consider—and perhaps, after all, to fail; but he who reproached his audience because they did not judge, knew all this, and yet did not exonerate them from the hazard and the toil. And the difficulties are not lighter now. Reward there is none, unless it be internal.

Of hard words and evil speaking we have enough, if it should happen that the conclusions arrived at do not accord with approved standards. The penalty may, however, be borne. Now let us begin at the beginning.

Belief is a state of mind induced by evidence. As to much the largest quantity of beliefs entertained by human beings, the evidence upon which they are grounded has been received unconsciously and unenquiringly. A child believes, we may say, instinctively that the persons whom it calls father and mother stand to it in those relations. The question, in fact, never arises in its mind. The impulse to receive with unquestioning faith what it is told is a primitive and needful one, and is exercised without praise or blame. No one would blame a child for believing whatever passed current among those with whom he was brought up. The history of Robinson Crusoe, of Rip Van Winkle, of Jack the Giant Killer, or of Joseph and his Brethren, would be, to a young child, equally credible if each were presented to him with equal gravity and apparent sincerity; and the belief so engendered has to be got rid of, either upon the authority of certain trusted persons, or by an exercise of the understanding. To believe upon evidence of some sort is one of the conditions man cannot escape from. The first intellectual faculty which comes into existence is belief or trust. To the persons surrounding him a child owes everything he has, and he can look to no other or higher source for what he stands in need of. His daily life is wholly provided for by others, his questions are answered by them, he is warned of dangers by them, he is guided and instructed by them, and, in short, is indebted to them for all he has and is. He, therefore, depends upon them, he confides in them, until by intercourse with others he acquires fresh information, which may destroy or confirm the credit of what originally he had relied upon. What is here stated is no peculiarity of Christianised or civilised people; it is true of all mankind. The lowest tribes, of

course, remain longest under the influence of the impressions they first received, because there are no others to act upon them, and they are less able mentally to assimilate what is new. Their powers remain dormant, because new circumstances seldom occur which are likely to awaken a change of thought. Jane Taylor reproaches us for our weakness in this respect. She says—

“ Why is opinion, singly as it stands,
 So much inherited like house and lands ?
 Whence comes it that from sire to son it goes,
 Like a dark eyebrow or a Roman nose ?

Opinion, therefore—such our mental dearth—
 Depends on mere locality or birth.
 Hence the warm Tory—eloquent and big
 With loyal zeal—had he been *born* a Whig,
 Would rave for liberty with equal flame,
 No shadow of distinction but the name.
 Hence Christian bigots, 'neath the Pagan cloud,
 Had roar'd for 'great Diana' just as loud ;
 Or dropp'd at Rome, at Mecca, or Pekin,
 For Fo, the Prophet, or the Man of Sin.”

That this is in the main a true description, few will be found to deny. But the *moral* of it may not by any means be so generally accepted. Opinions and beliefs generated in this way are the staple of what mankind everywhere are influenced and governed by. In the majority of cases, men hold by them with an invincible pertinacity, and they curse or compassionate those who, placed in different circumstances, have become possessed of a different mental furniture.

It is too often forgotten that the constitution of a man, the type and scope of his intelligence, and his capacity to ameliorate and alter the one or the other, are facts of inheritance and organisation, which admit of very little modification by any effort of will. A man can no more think as he likes than he can breathe as he likes. He must breathe as his organisation and his

lungs allow ; and he must think as his surroundings and constitution have fitted and qualified him to think, though, by contact with other things, he may modify his condition. As the untaught savage stands upon his native sod, he has no alternative but to believe that the earth on which he is placed is what it appears to be, an immovable structure, and a flat surface. All the true facts relating to it are shut up from him, and can only be acquired from others who have been taught better. He cannot even apprehend the facts intelligently when they are stated to him. He may learn the words, but he cannot picture to himself the relations which are disclosed. He is not to be blamed for this any more than he is to be blamed for not flying. He is no more absolute master of his own mind than he is of his muscles. He can only lift a certain weight, and he has only a certain quantity and plasticity of apprehension ; and he possesses only a very, very limited power of receiving new impressions, and of overcoming and obliterating old ones. That a piece of wood rudely carved can be offended and can hurt him, that the entrails of an animal can discover to him events that are coming to pass, or that what appears to be a portion of bread is, in fact, Almighty God, are propositions, which, if they have been gravely and systematically instilled into him, acquire an influence over him which, in its origin and growth, was involuntary, and which has created a bias difficult, nay, almost impossible, to counteract.

The beliefs of mankind are thus dependent upon the knowledge and opportunities they enjoy. The beliefs of each generation are the result and outcome of those that have preceded it. The ignorance and the prejudice which have everywhere clouded man's intellectual atmosphere have very slowly and gradually been dispersed, or, rather, are being dispersed. "Darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people" (Is. lx. 2), and the teachers who should have been foremost in

counteracting this dominion of evil have too often been active leaders in maintaining and propagating it.

“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so.” (Jer. v. 3.) Prophets, priests, and people combine to vindicate and uphold each other. Their opponents are most likely accounted the off-scouring of the earth. Society is well satisfied with itself; its beliefs and practices have the stamp of authority and respectability, and, with a Pharisaic self-sufficiency, it stands by its prophets and priests; and so, what happens to be popular amongst a chosen people—“my people”—what may be the accepted doctrine of acknowledged prophets and priests, may be, in reality, false and hollow. The approval of a generation, the assent and consent of their recognised prophets and priests, is not a valid verification of a religious creed, which can be honestly impeached in the high court of conscience and of reason. No authority, indeed, can overrule this judicature; for no authority can be constituted, with any defensible title, which as any other source and origin. The authority which is to avail against conscience and reason must itself have the sanction and seal of some conscience and reason which approves itself to the faculties and convictions of men.

We can get no higher. All signs and wonders may be mistaken and misunderstood. They are but impressions of sense; and such impressions—to wit, the motion of the earth, and many other such like things—need to be interpreted, and not until they have passed through the alembic of the mind are they to be relied upon as data of unquestioned validity. The current beliefs inherited by mankind have continually needed revision and correction, and to the end of time this will no doubt be their characteristic. That men should believe something is a necessity of their position. What they do not know they may believe or hope for: “for what a man seeth

why doth he yet hope for?" (Rom. viii. 24.) So long as it remains true that we "know in part" (1 Cor. xiii. 12), we must, in reference to whatever else affects us and is unknowable, come under the influence of belief. "We know in part, and we prophesy in part." (1 Cor. xiii. 9.) Our knowledge is partial, and so is our faith. The first proposition we admit, the second we may not be clear about. We may, however, very safely put all our attainments and possessions into one and the same category.

Whatever might be the value and authority of St. Paul's prophesying, and whatever was its essence and nature, he acknowledges that it was partial—viz., incomplete—a mere fragment, or portion, of some greater and more comprehensive whole; liable, therefore, to be misapprehended.

A small piece or section of a sphere would give to anyone who saw it for the first time a very imperfect idea of what it was in its entirety; just so with the partial beliefs of mankind. We have seen the perfunctory manner in which they arise; how at first "we see through a glass darkly"—believing all the while that we possess a transparent medium. Gradually we come to discover that the glass is obscure, and we learn painfully to doubt our once confident conclusions. Proof of some kind we always require; only we are satisfied at first with very poor proofs. We believe first and prove afterwards; and in such circumstances the assent to what has been received is easily obtained—it is assumed to be true, it is taken for granted, and is seldom cross-examined.

Like the rest of my fellows, I have had an inheritance of beliefs which for many years gave me no trouble; they were all compact, clear, and convincing. By degrees they came into contact with new circumstances and new persons, and they lost some of their authority; gradually they became incredible, and the ground upon which they stood crumbled away. With theology proper I did not meddle; mysteries and miracles created no difficulty

when they were proved by adequate evidence. It was plain matters of fact that were intractable—things which time does not alter. Men “lived and moved and had their being” two thousand years ago in the same fashion as now; and evidence then was what it is now. In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word was established then as now. (Matt. xviii. 16.) Witnesses are persons who hear and see, and their evidence regarding facts is worth much more than that of any other person. When statements disagree, those which are made by real witnesses overrule those which depend only upon hearsay; and this is a condition of things which always existed.

We may believe any facts which are supported by trustworthy and sufficient evidence, but wherever evidence is defective, we are justified in abating or withholding belief. The utmost that any dogmatical teacher can say or do is this: I have investigated these propositions, or some one else has, and upon this investigation or testimony I believe them to be true; and this proof, as thus affirmed by me, is, or should be, sufficient for you. We answer, How am I to know this? How am I to know that I ought to believe what seems to me contradictory upon any mere statement or asseveration of another man of like passions? Supernatural facts are recorded in a book, and are believed upon the evidence of that record. May I not read and examine the record? This, in some quarters, is held to be questionable. Well, but if I may go wrong in my enquiry touching what is contained in the record, may I not equally go wrong in accepting the unverified, written or oral, statement of a man fallible like myself? True, that his testimony is said to be corroborated and confirmed by a body of men who are called the Church. But here, again, who avouches for this? Who proves this averment? Is it not much more difficult to get at the truth of these very complicated and dubious materials than at the meaning of plain words

and simple statements contained in the brief narratives of unsophisticated men? We cannot cross-examine the Church, and no man can produce and condense into perspicuous language the vast and voluminous teachings of the men who have constituted the Church. If the original narratives from which our faith has been derived are clearer and more explicit than the commentaries made upon them, we shall be justified in holding to the one and rejecting the other; or, at any rate, if one set of statements is plain and simple, and the other obscure and vague, we should follow the ordinary course of human action, which adopts the former and eschews the latter.

In the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel we find these words:—

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.”

The 18th verse describes Joseph and Mary as espoused. In the 19th verse Joseph is designated as her “husband.” When, and under what circumstances, the marriage took place is not stated in any of the narratives.

Before making any comment upon them, we may remember that, whoever actually wrote these words, they were not written until at least fifty years after the events which they record had taken place. Jesus himself is supposed to have lived thirty-three years. St. Matthew was carrying on his business as a publican prior to his becoming a follower and an apostle of Jesus, and Jesus was thirty years of age when he began his public ministry. Matthew, therefore, could not have known anything of the events referred to in his Gospel, which took place at Nazareth and at Bethlehem, before he was born, or when he was an infant.

But the Gospel according to St. Matthew relates events

of a plain and circumstantial character, which Matthew may have witnessed, or have heard from those who did witness them. These events, therefore, have more of authenticity and evidential value than those which are said to have happened long before, and of which no one was cognisant at the time. We can have no doubt, as a matter of fact, that Jesus lived with Joseph and Mary from his earliest childhood, and if we could know the circumstances of their daily life, we should have the best possible information as to their mutual relations. We should know—not what reports grew up afterwards, but what were the actual feelings and habits that existed and were maintained between them. We should know—not what poets and painters imagined, and not what mystics excogitated, but how a Jewish carpenter and his wife acted towards a very remarkable child. The course of their ordinary life was observed by their neighbours. Their conduct towards their child was as well known as that of any other family in their native village. What they said, and what they thought, and what they anticipated, were as common topics of conversation as were the affairs of others. The neighbourhood knew when Joseph and Mary married; and if at that time there had been anything unusual in the circumstances, it could not have been concealed.

Comparing and analysing the narratives of Matthew and Luke, and reading them as history, not as theology, under the light of common knowledge and experience, what precisely do they tell us? While Joseph is in a state of doubt and hesitancy, Matthew—verse 20—declares that the angel said to him, “Take unto thee Mary *thy wife*.” Luke says, Joseph went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth to be taxed with Mary, *his espoused wife*, being great with child. Luke calls her “espoused wife,” although months before the angel had designated her simply “wife.” Joseph, it is said, “was minded to put her away privily.” The word trans-

lated "to put her away" occurs frequently in the New Testament, and, as applied to women, has always reference to the putting away of a married woman. It is sometimes translated "divorce." We may, therefore, conclude that when Joseph was minded to put Mary away, they had already been married; for it could not be said that he was minded to put her away unless they had previously been married. The perplexity of Joseph is not mentioned by Luke; but, when he first introduces Mary to us, he announces her as "espoused to a man whose name was Joseph." At this period Joseph and Mary were undistinguished from their neighbours; whatever, therefore, would be the judgment of neighbours respecting married or espoused persons would be the judgment of Nazareth respecting Joseph and Mary. We are dealing with the doings of men and women as they live and move and have their being in this world of ours. To judge of the facts fairly we must dismiss from our minds their later aspect, and look at them as they presented themselves to the people of Nazareth well nigh two thousand years ago. People were as well able then to construe and to understand facts of this order as they are now; a jury at Nazareth were as competent to determine a fact of their own common life as a jury in London of theirs. The sum of it then is, that at the moment of her introduction to us, Mary is espoused to a man whose name is Joseph, and is immediately afterwards said to be his wife; so espoused or married, the narrator next tells us, that an angel informs her she shall have a son, and she is represented as replying, "How can this be, seeing I know not a man?" This interview with the angel is not communicated to Joseph, for, though he is minded afterward to put her away, his apprehensions are set at rest by a dream. If there had been no marriage, past or impending, would not Nazareth have shared Joseph's feeling? The marriage covered the birth; without it, Nazareth must have followed the impulse of Joseph, and have put Mary away.

We are justified in applying to this narrative the same tests as we should apply to any other which related similar events; we are not incredulous of facts because they are miraculous. The question is, are certain alleged facts supported by such evidence as the common experience of mankind requires? There is only one fact here claiming to be miraculous; the rest are the every day events of life "known and read of all men." "Registrars of births" are modern officers, but the events which they record, their antecedents, and whatever was connected with them, were matters as much within the knowledge and observation of the people of Nazareth as they are elsewhere. To describe the ordinary facts of life needs no supernatural agency. What we ask is, did a certain event happen? and is it an event which the narrator had the means and opportunity of knowing? Must it have been known, also, to other persons, and is their joint evidence congruous and in agreement? If it is a common event, it passes without enquiry? If it is uncommon, and contrary to all experience, the evidence on which it depends must be conclusive and incontrovertible. A dogma may be a matter of elaborate argument deducible from recondite and remote premises; a fact of daily human experience can be attested by the plain people who are possessed of ordinary senses, and are able to draw simple inferences; their evidence is just as good, within their range, as that of their betters. Joseph and Mary were simple people like their neighbours; and when they married, if a prophet or an angel had announced to Mary that she should have a son, she could not have replied—no woman so circumstanced could have replied—"How can this be, seeing I know not a man?" The incongruity—nay, the impossibility—of such an answer is patent and obvious. What woman situated as Mary was could have so interrogated a stranger? The angel promised that she should have a son who should be great, should possess a throne, and reign for ever; she did not

reply, "How shall this be, seeing that I am poor and lowly?" but "How shall I become a mother?" though she was, or was just about to become, a wife.

There are but two other statements that need notice—the words, "before they came together," and the dream of Joseph. No uncorroborated words, written or spoken, and no dream, would be received, in judicial proceedings, in answer to those facts of universal experience which are bound up with the birth of a child; and judicial proceedings are those highest acts by which the rules of human wisdom and experience are applied to elucidate and direct human affairs. A narrative that offends against these rules cannot appeal to another jurisdiction of larger and more competent authority.

Let us now follow the narrative. Let us ascertain how all the parties introduced to us behave under the circumstances. Let us transport ourselves to Nazareth. Let us listen to the conversations that are reported. Let us observe the action and attitude of the persons concerned. Let us put the plain and natural construction upon their words and conduct, and let us then abide by the impression which all these things leave upon us—disregarding the theories and ideas which at a later period came into being. How did Joseph and Mary, whilst he lived under their roof, speak of Jesus? In what terms did the writer of the narrative refer to him? and how did his friends and acquaintance regard him? The answers to these questions ought to throw some light on matters vitally interesting to us all, and no better evidence is attainable or possible respecting them.

In the first place, we ask, how is the statement respecting the angels and the shepherds at Bethlehem consistent with later events? The shepherds are said "to have made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child, and all that heard it wondered at those things which were told them." (Luke ii. 18.) Public attention was, therefore, called to the circum-

stances of Jesus's birth at the time. These reports, and the circumstances so made known, must have created a permanent and abiding interest in the person so distinguished. He could not sink down into a common person. The shepherds—who came into Bethlehem, made known abroad what they had heard and seen, and excited wonder in all who listened to them—could not return home as if nothing had occurred.

The name and fame of Jesus could not have been obscured. The multitude of the Heavenly Host must have made a deep and lasting impression on all who saw, or heard of, and believed it. If it were known at the time, it must have arrested attention, and fastened it on the person of Jesus. He could not have returned home like another child. Bethlehem would have been stirred to its depths at the announcement—the good tidings of great joy. But we never hear again that these events were further taken notice of in Bethlehem, or that the good tidings and the great joy had any effect upon the people of that town. Yet surely, if so grand a scene was witnessed, if such wonderful words were spoken, and such prospects opened out, the child who was the subject of all this marvellous revelation would never again have been lost sight of, and would not have been allowed to mingle in the crowd and to pass into obscurity.

Besides this, wise men from the East hear of his birth; Herod hears of it, and is troubled; and all Jerusalem with him. (Matt. ii. 4.) There are the star, the gold, frankincense, myrrh, the wise men falling down and worshipping, and yet we are not informed that any further result followed from these results. No expectations were raised; no persons concerned themselves further about Jesus. Joseph and Mary return to Nazareth, and there is nothing in the narrative which shows that any further enquiries were made about Jesus by the people of Bethlehem; or that the friends and neighbours of Joseph and Mary, at Nazareth, had any

knowledge of what had taken place at Bethlehem; or were made acquainted with the visit and gifts of the wise men of the East; or with the appearance and utterances of the angels. Surely some report of these great events must have preceded them, and the interest of their friends and neighbours have been aroused. They would have been anxious to see the gifts which had been presented; they would have been anxious to hear what had been done and said by the angels. Such visions of angels were not common things. Wise men could not come from the East under the guidance of stars, and bring with them gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, without its being noised abroad—in fact, the narrative distinctly says the shepherds “made it known abroad.” Is it not, then, strange that events of such an order made no impression upon the people who witnessed them, and upon those who were made acquainted with them?

We are ignorant, and “know only in part.” We cannot, therefore, say in regard to past events what is possible or otherwise; but we do know what wonder means—it is an emotion which has been felt by all men; and we know what it is to make a thing “known abroad”; and we know that if any astonishing circumstance affecting both eyes and ears comes to pass, and is “made known abroad,” and excites popular wonder, the impression is not likely to fade away. And if it should be connected with some particular person, and should be the revelation and assertion of some marvellous destiny and greatness which is to befall him, the wonder would not die out, but would follow him through his after years, and would prevent his ever becoming, or being spoken of, as an ordinary man.

How different from all this is the history of Jesus! He returns from Bethlehem, and from Egypt, he takes up his abode at Nazareth, and not one word is said to indicate that more was expected of him than of his neighbours, or that there was anything in his history

which marked him out or distinguished him from them.

Following the narrative, the first event we meet with which throws any light upon the subject is related in Luke ii. 41, where it is said, "his parents went to Jerusalem every year." Joseph and Mary are by the historian denominated his parents. If the fact were not so, the statement is misleading; and if anyone objects that it is a statement which has to be accommodated, and should not be construed literally, the answer is, that other facts and beliefs are set up and substantiated by the literal interpretation of words, which, it may be contended, are figurative. And, again, when the question is, What were the impressions abroad respecting some particular person? surely the words spoken by those who knew him are very cogent evidence. Taking them, however, for what they are worth, they prove that, when writing in an unconstrained or historical manner, the historian mentions Joseph and Mary as the *parents* of Jesus.

But there is confirmatory evidence of the most decisive character in connection with the same event. Mary, addressing Jesus, on this particular occasion, says—"Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Suppose these words of Mary are not allowed to be conclusive, they prove this, at least, that Mary spoke of Joseph as the father of Jesus. They prove, indisputably, that the child Jesus was recognised as the son of Joseph, for his mother so designates him; and, if he were so, this is natural; and if it were not so, it would be unnatural. Whether we choose to make little or much of this evidence, it must be said that no other species of evidence is available; and that no instance can be produced in which Mary is represented as having asserted a different state of things.

If it could be proved that Mary had at any time asserted what the narrator has related of the circum-

stances which preceded the birth of Jesus, very much would, very properly, be made of it. If it could be proved that the "kinsfolk and acquaintance" of Joseph and Mary (Luke ii. 44) had been informed that Jesus was not the son of Joseph, and if facts proved that, as a child, he was not recognised or known as his son, it would be a strong confirmation of the narrator's story of his supernatural birth. But the evidence is the very reverse of this. Of all things in the world, the most important to be known was that Jesus was not the son of Joseph, and yet the historian here mentions Joseph as his parent. Mary herself calls him his father. For the purpose in view, evidence cannot go beyond this.

In reference to this history there are two contingencies possible. The one, that Joseph and Mary should have stated the supernatural circumstances as set down by St. Matthew; and the other, that they should have allowed Jesus to grow up and be recognised as their own son. If, in truth, he were not their son, then to allow their neighbours to remain under a false impression was to conduce to, and to connive at, falsehood; but if he was their son, their conduct was natural and reasonable, and any other conduct would have been a deliberate imposture. We shall see, as we go on, from the result of their actions, that only one construction can be put upon them—they treated Jesus as their son. Their neighbours saw it and knew it. It is not necessary to say that no child could be born in a supernatural manner, "for we know" only "in part"; but we may safely say that no child could be so born—among a woman's own people, and in a small community—without its being known and noticed at the time; that a woman of blameless character, living in reputable circumstances, in a small community, under the eye of her neighbours, cannot have a first-born son, in an irregular manner, without its being known. If the circumstances are such as redound to the honour of the woman, and are believed

by her to be fraught with blessing to her people and the world, and if she is so confident of this that she publicly asserts "all generations," on account of it, "shall call me blessed"—she could not be a party to the concealment of the true fact; she could not allow her son to grow up as the son of her husband; she could not lend herself to the propagation of what was untrue; she could not publicly, and without remonstrance, permit the true facts of the birth to be obliterated, and an utterly erroneous impression to get abroad and take its place.

Yet, when Jesus is twelve years of age, his mother addresses him as the child of Joseph—"Thy father and I have sought thee." Between this twelfth year of Jesus and his thirtieth year we have no event of his life recorded, but it is quite clear that no new impression of his birth had grown up. Turning to John's Gospel, we find in the first chapter an account of his introduction to his first follower:—"Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." (John i. 45.) Not the son of Mary, by a supernatural birth, but the son of Joseph. Evidently, therefore, at the time, this was the public and recognised impression, or how should Philip assert it? Shortly afterwards we are told by Luke (ch. iv. 16) that Jesus "came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up," and spoke in the synagogue, and the people wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, and they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" Can anything be conceived more natural than this? Jesus had been "brought up" among them; they had known him from his youth, and all his life long, as the son of Joseph. Plainly they had never heard of any supernatural birth, of the Heavenly Host at Bethlehem, of the gold, frankincense, and myrrh, of the wise men from the East, or of the guiding star. Jesus had lived amongst them as the child of Joseph and Mary. "Is not this Joseph's son?" was

their first exclamation. Is it possible that any other parentage had been heard of? Jesus says to his former friends and neighbours, "No prophet is accepted in his own country." And why? Because in his own country his origin, his daily walk, his intercourse with his friends, and the common-places of his life, are remembered, and it is hard to understand how his new pretensions and powers have been acquired, or can be genuine.

The people of Nazareth had known Jesus as one of themselves, as a carpenter. They had heard of what had been done in Capernaum, and they said, with the utmost apparent simplicity and good faith: "Is not this Joseph's son?" They asked for no wonders to be performed; but, in reply to their question, "Is not this Joseph's son?" Jesus said to them—not, You are mistaken, I am not Joseph's son, but—"Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself. Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here, in thy country." They had not said this, but, in response to their question, Jesus suggests this as their state of mind: "Ye will surely say, knowing as you do who I am." After this, it is said, they were—one sees not why—"filled with wrath." So far as we can see, they had not acted blamably. A person who had grown up from boyhood to manhood, under their eye, as the son of one of their neighbours, had unexpectedly assumed the character of a "prophet" (verse 25); and they asked: "Is not this Joseph's son?" What we are concerned with is the fact that at Nazareth, where he had been brought up—"brought up" meaning where he had lived until manhood—had been daily seen and spoken to, he was known only as Joseph's son. No one remembered any story of a supernatural birth, which might have accounted for the phenomenon of his prophetic character. No, here, in his own country, among his own people, until he commenced his public career, he was known only as Joseph's son. Jesus himself has told us: "No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a

secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light." (Luke xi. 33.) And we may be quite sure that an event so surpassingly important as his own parentage and supernatural birth would not have been put in a secret place or under a bushel. He affirms that no man does such a thing.

In the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew, we read of Jesus being again in "his own country"; and his neighbours, the people who had been acquainted with him all his life, are represented as asking—"Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren James and Joses, and Simon and Juda? And his sisters are they not all with us?" A perfectly natural enquiry; proving beyond all doubt that, in his own country, there was no knowledge of any mysterious or supernatural birth. He was the son of Joseph and Mary. In the sixth chapter of St. Mark, there is a reference to a visit of Jesus to his own country; and, with a slight variation, the same circumstances are repeated—"Whence hath this man these things? And what is the wisdom which was given unto this man? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses, and Juda and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him." Can any conduct be more natural, when all the events of a man's life are familiar to them? But if the circumstances of his supernatural birth had been known, how natural it would have seemed that he should be thus distinguished from the crowd.

The genealogy in Matthew's Gospel, if read simply, and without bias, leads also to the conclusion that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary. These are the words (Matt. i. 16): "Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." The antecedent of "whom," in such a recital, is, naturally and inevitably, the husband and the wife, whose names are mentioned together.

Once more, the only other Gospel which contains the genealogy brings its quota of evidence to the same effect. The twenty-third verse of the fourth chapter of St. Luke asserts—"Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph." "As was supposed" looks much like the marginal note of some copyist introduced into the text. Why, also, the marks of parenthesis? The word "supposed" is in the original the same word as is elsewhere translated "think"—"Think not I am come to destroy the law," &c. The expression, therefore, means that during his lifetime Jesus was thought to be the son of Joseph. Could any fact be more conclusive as to his parentage? The historian himself admits that the impression which existed during the lifetime of Jesus was that he was the son of Joseph. The impression would only be derived from facts calculated to produce it. The actions and the words of Joseph and Mary, the actions and words of Jesus himself, must have combined to create the impression which prevailed. The events themselves are not of a nature to admit of secrecy or disguise.

If a promise had been made to Mary by some mysterious messenger that she should be the mother of the great national deliverer whose advent the Jews anticipated, she would surely have called together her friends and neighbours, that they might rejoice with her, not on her own account, but on account of her people and country. The throne of David filled the Jewish imagination with visions of conquest and glory; and the Jewish woman who possessed indubitable evidence that she was the favoured individual through whom her race would be restored to its ancient splendour would not put her light under a bushel, but on a candlestick. Besides, the events at Bethlehem would speak, trumpet-tongued, of some great destiny in store for the child, whose birth had been celebrated there. The news would travel to Nazareth and rouse expectations. After the wonders of Bethlehem, Jesus was taken to the temple, and Joseph and Mary "marvelled" at the words

spoken by Simeon. How could they marvel, if they remembered the angel Gabriel and Bethlehem?

When St. Paul defended himself before Agrippa and Festus, he appealed to the publicity of certain events as proof of their authenticity—"This thing was not done in a corner." But this thing, the most wonderful of all, has not one fact in the entire subsequent history of Jesus, as related, which supports or confirms it. The generation contemporary with him knew nothing of it; they "supposed," his biographer assures us, that Jesus was the son of Joseph. And such a supposition, prevailing everywhere, and contradicted nowhere, is evidence which in such cases is absolutely final and conclusive. The reputed parents of a child, who live amongst their own people, and about whom no mystery exists whilst they live, cannot be deprived of their parental character by later writings, without the production of plain, unequivocal, and overwhelming proof. The rules which determine the parentage of children have been long ago settled and ascertained. Courts of law have had to deal with such questions in innumerable instances. Was such a person the child of certain parents? is a question which has been often enough asked. Men have had to unravel tangled statements on this subject many a time and oft; and they have come to an agreement as to what circumstances may be relied upon, and what should be distrusted.

The very foundations of civil society are concerned in the facts involved in such questions. The actions of parents and children, and neighbours and friends, have all been observed, and the value of them has been thoroughly appraised. Craft and fraud may succeed occasionally in throwing a veil of mystery and doubt over the birth of some particular person, but the plain, practical doings of ingenuous persons are not to be mistaken. The transactions of twenty or thirty years, pointing to a simple conclusion, are not to be set aside upon the statement of men

who might not have been born when the transactions occurred, who had no personal knowledge of them, and whose other statements are wholly at variance with them. Hearsay evidence, supported by no facts, but contradicted by the conduct and acts of all persons concerned, has no evidential force or value.

In the first volume of Grote's "History of Greece," page 472, 2nd ed., is the following note:—

"Plato passed among a large portion of his admirers for the actual son of Apollo, and his reputed father Aristo, on marrying, was admonished in a dream to respect the person of his wife Periktione, then pregnant by Apollo, until after the birth of the child Plato."

We do not pause upon this piece of history and believe it, because people once did so; it seemed to them possible; it seems to us impossible; and we do not trouble ourselves about it. We do not think it necessary to test the miraculous stories current in ancient mythologies; yet they have been believed, and were at one time, by some people, deemed as credible as the miraculous stories which obtain general credence. To the ignorant people who first hear it, one miraculous story may seem as probable as another, and all sorts of events stand upon the same level. Amongst a credulous people improbabilities are entirely disregarded, and they are ready to accept any story without enquiry, and without distrust; it is only experience which enables them to separate what rests upon real evidence from what rests upon none. The question to be asked is not whether such and such an event could happen, but whether there is any real, valid evidence that it did happen.

In the lifetime of Jesus there was plainly no expectation that he would become the founder of a new religion. We have the means of ascertaining what impression was made upon his disciples and apostles by their intercourse with him. We can tell what they thought; and the evidence of what they thought is of far more value and

weight than the thoughts and beliefs of men who lived hundreds of years later. I appeal only to the testimony of the Evangelists. I ask what it is they tell us of the doings and sayings of Jesus? I ask how the events of his life acted upon and influenced the people who witnessed them? And I venture to say that the contemporaneous observations of men who saw and heard what is recorded are worth infinitely more than reports of unwitnessed events which are wholly uncorroborated; or, rather, which are contradicted by every account that should confirm or illustrate them.

At thirty years of age, St. Luke informs us, Jesus "was supposed" to be the son of Joseph. This is not a supposition or thought which could have sprung up without evidence. When a royal child is to be born, the greatest care is taken that evidence of his birth shall be unimpeachable and complete; and no child, brought up from his birth in a carpenter's home, one whom every neighbour had known and recognised from infancy as the carpenter's son, could pass into a royal household as of legitimate and royal descent, if no person and no particle of evidence were produced to prove the fact. That a man was all his life supposed to be the son of certain persons by those amongst whom they all lived, is evidence not to be controverted, except by similar evidence of greater weight and conclusiveness.

If we were called upon by any court to determine an issue relating to the birth and parentage of a man, which had to be ascertained after his death; and if it were proved that he lived from infancy in the midst of a small community, as the child of parents, members of this community, natives of the same place, and well-known there; if it appeared that his mother publicly recognised her husband as the child's father; if the neighbours testified that they had known the child from his infancy as the offspring of these parents; if he had, to their knowledge, lived with them as one of their children until

he grew to manhood; if he had afterwards occupied a public position, and had become the acknowledged founder of an important religious body; if his first friends and followers had recognised him in some distinct manner as the son of these parents; if he were publicly challenged, by those who had known him all his life, as their son; and if it were admitted by his most eminent biographer that, during his lifetime, a certain man, who lived with his mother, was regarded as his father—such impression, and such facts, would assuredly overrule, in the mind of every impartial juror, any statements of an opposite or inconsistent character. If testimony, in any case, is to determine fact, no one could for a moment doubt in this instance upon which side the testimony preponderated. Whoever, without prepossessions or prejudice, came to determine such an issue, could feel no doubt respecting his verdict.

If the apostles and disciples of Jesus had known that his parentage was such as one or two verses represent it to be, they must have expected of him much greater things than they actually did. If they had known what is said to have passed between the angel and Mary, if they knew what is said to have occurred at Bethlehem, they could not have been uninfluenced by it; they must have believed that Jesus was a much more extraordinary person than they judged him to be.

The two greatest events in the history of Jesus are his birth and his death. There is nothing in the history which indicates that his disciples, who during three years lived with him, and heard his teaching, had any other belief than that he was born as other men are. Their words and actions furnish no evidence of a contrary belief. What was the view, then, which they entertained of his death? The Evangelists tell us that Jesus predicted to his disciples the manner and circumstances of his death; that he foretold how, and by whom, he should be slain—not in any slight and trivial, but in a most

formal and deliberate manner, which could not fail to produce in the hearer's mind a deep and abiding impression.

The three Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, give the details in nearly the same words. Matthew says (ch. xvii. 22, 23): "While they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again; and they were exceeding sorry." Mark says (ch. ix. 31, 32): "He taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him." Luke's version (ch. ix. 44, 45) is: "Jesus said unto his disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears, for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying." The same warning is given on a later occasion, which Luke thus records (ch. xviii. 31, 33): "Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge him, and put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things. And this saying was hid from them. Neither knew they the things which were spoken."

Substantially the same statement is made by Matthew and Mark, but there are slight discrepancies. Matthew informs us they were exceeding sorry; while Mark and Luke affirm they did not understand what was said to them. The words seem very plain, and represent actions not easy to mistake or to misapprehend. There yet is one other occasion on which this same warning is given, and the same three Evangelists repeat the circumstance,

and this is added: "Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan."

There are thus separate occasions on which Jesus informs his disciples of his death and resurrection in an unambiguous and distinct manner, with accompaniments which could not fail to arrest their attention. He rebukes Peter by an indelible word—Satan; the disciples are told to let his sayings sink down into their ears; he takes the twelve apart on the way while he makes this communication to them, and commences with the exclamation, "Behold." He employs every method which would give force and effect to his words, and yet Mark and Luke, who did not hear them, assert the disciples did not understand what was said; whilst Matthew, who may be supposed to have been present, says "they were exceeding sorry." If they did not understand, how could they be exceeding sorry? If they did not understand, how did Peter come to say, "Be it far from thee, Lord," and to rebuke him? And how could Jesus reply—"Get thee behind me, Satan"? If the words, as recorded in the Gospels, were spoken, if the intimations were given, men of the most ordinary faculties must have understood them; and if proof were wanting, it is furnished by the adversaries of Jesus. In the twenty-seventh chapter of Matthew, and at the sixty-third verse, these words occur—

"The Chief Priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again: Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead; so the last error shall be worse than the first."

Can any statements be more incomprehensible than these? The disciples are forewarned of certain facts which are shortly to come to pass; and this is done in words the meaning of which is clear and plain, and they

so far comprehend them that they are said to be very sorry ; and yet all the while, we are told, they did not understand them, although the adversaries of Jesus, having heard them in some far less formal and impressive manner, remember them, and propose that precautions should be taken on account of them. The chief priests and Pharisees had not seen the wonders wrought by Jesus ; they had not heard the “gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth” ; they had not travelled with him by day and night, and seen the waves of the sea stilled at his word, nor the dead return to life at his command ; and yet they remember some few pregnant words uttered by him, which had come to their ears. They take notice of them, and understand them, and act upon them ; whilst his disciples—nay, his twelve favoured apostles—to whom they were distinctly and emphatically addressed, under circumstances so sad and so impressive that they were made very sorry, did, nevertheless, fail to understand them, or attach to them the slightest importance. The chief priests, on the contrary, are said to have been put on their guard by the recollection of the words which they had heard, or heard of ; while the apostles, who were made very sorry by them, forgot, and utterly overlooked and disregarded them.

This assertion is not made without adequate evidence. I need not repeat the events of the crucifixion ; but ask, what was the conduct of the apostles and of the women, after Jesus was taken down from the cross ? Remembering the many mighty works which he had done in their presence, remembering what is said in the narrative of his relationship with God, remembering all that the apostles had heard and seen, according to the Gospel narrative, one would imagine that the men and women who had seen and heard Jesus as they had, would have expected him to baffle the vengeance of his enemies, would have looked for his return from the grave. Let anyone read what is to be found in the Gospels ; what is said by Jesus

himself, of his kingdom, of his power and divinity; and then let him recollect that the persons who had been with him during all his public life, and whom he called not servants, but friends (John xv. 10), heard all this—moreover, are represented as believers in him—and yet after he was crucified they consigned him to the tomb without any hope or expectation that they would see him again alive. “Then they took the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.” (John xix. 40.) “The women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and where the body was laid; and they returned and prepared spices and ointment.” (Luke xxiii. 55.) “And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James, and Salome, had brought sweet spices that they might come and anoint him.” (Mark xvi. 1.)

It is quite clear that the myrrh, and aloes, and spices, and ointments, were to be applied to the body of Jesus, “as the manner of the Jews is to bury.” He was buried, in all respects, as other Jews were, though it might be with greater reverence and affection. But there was not a thought of his returning to life. They were preparing to embalm his body, according to the custom of the Jews. And, though it is represented in the narrative that these persons had seen him raise Lazarus from the dead, and had heard the wonderful discourse in the eleventh chapter of St. John, they proceed to dispose of the body as the manner of the Jews is to bury. He was dead; “and a great stone is rolled to the door of the sepulchre, and they depart.” (Matt. xxvii. 60.) Is it possible to believe that the persons who witnessed all that is related of Jesus in the four Gospels could have consigned him to the tomb, and embalmed his body, as that of a mortal friend? Yet that they did so is as clear as words can make it. Must we infer that the discourses which we read in the Gospels were not spoken as we can find them? Beyond

all doubt, they were written many years after they were said to have been spoken ; and the proved actions of the apostles and friends of Jesus, after his death, are entirely inconsistent with their having heard what we now read. Again and again, in the Gospels, we read that persons did not believe in Jesus ; though it is not anywhere said what it was they did not believe. The presumption, of course, is that some other persons did believe ; though what their belief was is nowhere specifically stated. Peter asserts his belief of something respecting Jesus, and Mary also ; but, whatever it might be, it was consistent with a belief of the ultimate mortality of Jesus. The affection of the women would have quickened their hopes, if they had ever heard any words which indicated that Jesus was not mortal, like themselves. But their only thought is, " Who shall roll us away the stone ; for it was very great." (Mark xvi. 3, 4.) Everything indicated their belief in his final departure. Up to the time of his death, not one of them could have believed that he was " equal to the Father as touching the Godhead." The whole course of his life was before them—far, far more than we read in the Gospels ; for St. John assures us, " There are also many other things which Jesus did ; the which, if they should be written everyone, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." (John xxi. 25.) And yet it is evident beyond all controversy that he was buried as were other men, " as the manner of the Jews was " ; his friends and followers rolling a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, to secure it against intrusion ; leaving it, at the same time, accessible for the further anointing and embalming.

More conclusive evidence it is not possible to have of what the friends of Jesus, and his apostles, thought concerning him when he was taken down from the cross. Strong and irresistible as is this evidence by itself, it is confirmed by that which follows. When it was announced " unto the eleven, and to all the rest," that

Jesus had risen from the dead, "the words seemed to them as idle tales; and they believed them not." (Luke xxiv. 9-11.) Can any language convey a stronger impression of the incredulity of the persons referred to? The eleven, and all the rest—we know not, how many—regarded the announcement of the resurrection of Jesus as an "idle tale." How could eleven men hear and see what it is alleged they had heard and seen, and yet treat the announcement of the resurrection as an "idle tale"? Let anyone try to put himself in the position of these eleven apostles. Let him imagine himself to have been for three years the companion and friend of such an one as Jesus; performing miracles himself, by power derived from Jesus; seeing miracles, moreover, marvellous in their character, performed by Jesus; and hearing him give solemn assurances that he should shortly be crucified, and, within three days, would rise from the dead. Let him imagine that such has been his experience; and then let him further imagine that the crucifixion has taken place, as was predicted. Could he imagine himself so unbelieving that he would bar the tomb in which his "Master and Lord" was laid by a great stone; and afterwards, when he was told of the resurrection, that he could regard it as an "idle tale"?

If the apostles could deliberately regard the resurrection as an "idle tale," how are others to believe it? It is possible in certain cases that the reality of death may be only apparent, and be actually an illusion; some great shock to the nervous system may be mistaken for death; and, in all good faith, plain persons, ignorant of the laws of life, may mistake syncope for death. Our experience tells us that unskilled persons might easily mistake the appearance of death for the reality. For instance, a drowned person might seem dead whilst animation was only suspended. Those who had not seen such a restoration would not anticipate it, and would not, if it occurred,

know it to be possible. We know that a person so drowned, and apparently dead, might return to life again, to the amazement of ignorant beholders, who might, in perfect good faith, believe that he had been recovered from actual death. There are unmistakable signs of death known to the instructed, but the signs recognised by uninstructed persons may be fallacious; and, therefore, without concluding anything as to particular cases, one may say, generally, that a person need not be accused of falsehood or misrepresentation who reported a resurrection, which, on more accurate investigation, might turn out to be only an apparent one. We must know all the conditions before we can assert that a certain physical event is possible or impossible.

If we were told that a man claimed divine attributes, and performed miracles, as the evidence of a divine mission; and if he had a select band of followers, who were said to believe in him; and if he had assured them with great solemnity that he should shortly be crucified, and would rise from the dead on the third day; and if, after he was crucified, he was consigned to the tomb as other men are, and a great stone rolled to the door of his sepulchre—it is clear that his followers could not have believed what he had said to them of his rising from the dead. And it is plain that, possessing the special Jewish belief respecting the God and Father of their nation, they could not have believed that the friend whom they had buried with the rites and ceremonies of their country was “equal to the Father as touching the Godhead.” To the last moment of his life, and after his death, the apostles and the women, so affectionate and so assiduous, believed in the final and irrevocable death of Jesus. They could not, therefore, have believed respecting him what is asserted in the Nicene Creed.

It is no question of moral delinquency; of failure under temptation to sustain rectitude of conduct. It is

nothing of this kind. With the possible partial exception of Peter, all of them are in the history classed as believers, and the question is, what was the nature and substance of their belief? Was it merely that of men who asked, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom unto Israel?" Peter says, "Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" (Matt. xix. 27.) Did their expectation rise no higher than this? Was it some temporal advantage for which they were looking? It seems to be so. When the great words which they are said to have spoken come to be interpreted by events, they shrink into very small dimensions. The confessions which are found in the history, when they are translated into actions, lose their grandeur. Can it be the same individual who asserts, "We believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God"—who, within a few short days, declares, "I know not this man"? That he must have uttered a falsehood is plain. But what—when he spoke it—was the value of the first confession? What in his mouth did it mean? It was most probably written down well nigh a hundred years after it was spoken.

There is evidence of another sort to be considered. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Matthew, and the sixteenth verse, we read:—

"The eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. They saw him and worshipped him, *but some doubted*; and he said, Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them, &c., teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

Peter was of the eleven, and must have heard these words if they were so spoken. We turn to the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, containing the history of Cornelius, and we find Peter is represented as addressing these words to Cornelius:—

"Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew

to keep company, or come unto one of another nation ; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

How had this been shown to him? By a strange vision. Peter evidently did not remember the words of Jesus—his last words—directing him to teach all nations—"to preach the Gospel to every creature." (Mark xvi. 15.) He takes no note of this injunction. The vision he attributes to God. The command of Jesus—introduced by the solemn words, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations"—does not dissolve a Jewish bond. Peter says, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." The words spoken by Jesus some years before, although so large, and comprehensive, and unequivocal, had not taught him this; it remains in Peter's apprehension unlawful for him, a Jew, to come unto one of another nation, although the last words of Jesus were, Go and teach all nations. Is it possible that when he visited Cornelius, he believed that Jesus was equal to the Father as touching the Godhead, and that his command was sufficient to absolve him from a Jewish obligation?

We ask, as we read the narratives contained in the Gospels, what was the belief respecting Jesus of Nazareth entertained by those devoted disciples who left all and followed him? What was the belief of those women who ministered unto him with so much zeal and affection? Peter is represented to have said—"We believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." (John vi. 69.) Martha is represented as saying—"I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." (John xi. 27.) "The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever." (John xii. 34.) The people seem to have had some worthier apprehension of Christ than the apostles. They had heard that he

abideth for ever; but immediately after we are told (verse 37), "yet they believed not on him."

We are not informed what it was they did not believe. When Peter's belief is put to the test, it is not found to have any reality in it. That in the presence of danger he should screen himself by a falsehood is intelligible; that he should begin to curse and swear, and to say, "I know not *this man*" (Mark xiv. 71), is remarkable; but that he should ever have believed concerning him that he was "equal to the Father as touching the Godhead," is inconceivable.

However terrified he might have been, if he had heard and seen what is written in the narrative, and if he had himself spoken the words which are attributed to him, how could he have forgotten everything, and have replied, "I know not *this man*"? The enemies of Jesus had not believed in his divine mission: Peter, on the contrary, had believed—what? He wept bitterly when he thought of his cowardice and weakness; he could hardly have forgotten in those bitter moments how Jesus had foretold this scene of the crucifixion and its surroundings; he must have remembered how, in his enthusiasm of feeling, he had said, "That be far from thee"; and the unusually stern words which followed, "Get thee behind me, Satan," must have rung in his ears as he pondered over all that had passed. But no! If they were ever spoken, these words left no remembrance behind, for after the repose and recollection of the Sabbath, when he is told of the resurrection, "it seemed to him as an idle tale, and he believed it not."

Let us recall what had passed in the course of Peter's companionship with Jesus, the miracles he had seen, his walking on the sea, and those other miracles he had himself performed—"Thou art Peter"—his professions of faith, the transfiguration, the discourses of Jesus; all the varied and wonderful statements and events which Peter had listened to and witnessed. These things, so written

in the Gospels, are adduced as proofs of the divinity of Jesus. Peter must have been acquainted with all that we now read, and all the many other things, which if they were written would fill the world; and yet at the conclusion of all, Jesus is only "this man." He was consigned to the tomb as were other men, and when there was a report of his resurrection Peter disbelieved it, and treated it as an idle tale. And it was not Peter only who so disbelieved; it was the eleven, and all the rest. Not one of them remembered the predictions of Jesus; nothing which they had seen or heard had impressed them with the belief that he was "equal to the Father as touching the Godhead." "A great stone was rolled to the door of the sepulchre, and they departed."

Between the crucifixion and the time when the Gospels were written much had happened of which very little authentic history remains. The Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles are all the contemporary documents which can be relied upon. The evidence that the Gospels were not written until very many years after the crucifixion is not at first apparent to everyone. The disputes amongst learned men as to the actual dates of these documents have not yet been disposed of. I—an uninstructed layman—can only compare one author with another, and calculate upon which side probability seems to preponderate. But there is evidence in the documents themselves, which is, so far as it goes, distinct and clear. No one can say with certainty that the Gospel which bears the name of Luke was written by the physician Luke. But the introduction to it, by whomsoever written, gives us some means of approximately determining its date. The first words of this Gospel are: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us." From these words it is clear that many other such declarations existed, or, as Luke puts it, "had been taken in hand"—had been committed to writing.

Whether they were authentic declarations or no does not appear, and whether the three now contained in our Bibles were of the number does not appear. It is only said that at the time this was written many other persons had previously taken in hand the same work. The next words are : “ Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses.” It is not said that any of the “ eye-witnesses ” had set forth anything in writing. The writer then goes on to say : “ It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of the things wherein thou hast been instructed.” Theophilus was, therefore, a man at the time this Gospel was written, and he had been in his childhood instructed in the Christian religion. We must allow some considerable margin for such effects to have taken place as are implied in this statement. Putting these things together, therefore, it can hardly be reckoned less than thirty years after the crucifixion when this Gospel was written, and it may have been much more. In Dr. Burton’s Greek Testament there are these notes on this chapter—First : “ This seems to show that Luke himself was not an eye-witness ; ” and second : “ That Theophilus was perhaps a man of some rank at Antioch.” The words “ most excellent ” are not words implying anything respecting the personal character of Theophilus, for the Greek word which they represent is applied to Felix (Acts xxiii. 26) and to Festus (xxvi. 25) ; and is, therefore, a title, legal or complimentary, which, like our own right honourable, might or might not belong to a man to whom personally it was inapplicable. From the internal evidence it seems clear that this Gospel, by whomsoever written, was composed by a person who was not an eye-witness of what he declares, and who took the work in hand at least twenty or thirty, or it may be fifty or sixty, years after the crucifixion ; therefore, from the birth of

Christ, not less than fifty or sixty, or it may be one hundred, years.

It should be remembered that no proof can be produced of the actual date of the work; only inference and conjecture are available, beyond such intimations as are contained in the Gospel itself. It was addressed to a man of some rank; and he may have arrived at this position at an early period of his manhood. He had been "catechised" in Christianity; which implies organisation and consolidation amongst the people who professed this religion. A person, said to have been instructed in the tenets of John Wesley, would, probably, be a person born after the sect had been established and gained a footing. It is not likely that the writer of the Gospel would address himself to a child; or that the title, most excellent, would be applied to a mere youth. We have, therefore, some data which show the time and circumstances under which the Gospel was written.

I have said there is no proof that this Gospel was written by Luke; and when I say this, I refer to another part of the New Testament to show what I mean. In the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, iii. 17, St. Paul says, "The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is the token in every epistle; so I write." The word token means a "sign," a "seal," a test or proof of genuineness. Such was St. Paul's method of certifying his own work. To the Galatians he says (ch. vi. 6): "See how large a letter I have written unto you, with my own hand;" or, rather, "see with what large letters." Here, again, he calls attention to the mark, or sign, by which his letter might be known. "The salutation by the hand of me Paul." (Colossians iv. 18.) No one can contend that there is any such evidence as this respecting any one of the Gospels. The superscription is, "according to Matthew," &c.; but there is no token or mark to corroborate it. Again, there is a unity of style, a continuity of thought, which distinguishes a

letter, as contrasted with a mere inartificial narrative. The one lends itself to interpolation and alteration much more readily than the other. And there may be no undoubted and unchallenged writings of the narrator with which a special narrative may be compared. It is an inference from more or less uncertain premises that the Gospel was written by Luke; and the writer did not care to put his authorship beyond doubt by affixing some token to his manuscript which should authenticate it.

If we transport ourselves, in thought, to the period we are considering, and make use of the incidental information which is left us, we shall probably think that the apostles were not able to write at all. Peter and John, the foremost of them, are described (Acts iv. 13) as "unlearned and ignorant men." And we can tell what this means. In modern days we may have heard a man speak in a court with some fluency, and perceive at the same time that he is "unlearned and ignorant"—has learned neither to read nor to write. Just so the Pharisees recognise the illiterateness of the apostles; and their position and employment render it improbable that they had acquired these arts.

There is some negative evidence, besides this of the Jewish Council, that the apostles were not writers. It is implied, if it is not asserted, in Luke's Gospel, that the persons who had taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of the things believed were those only who had received them from eye-witnesses. The eye-witnesses themselves are not said to have taken this work in hand.

It is impossible to overlook the fact that the writer of this Gospel makes no claim to supernatural knowledge. He asserts that he "had perfect understanding, from the very first, of all things which were delivered unto us by eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word." Whether the eye-witnesses and ministers were the same persons is not clear. It might well be, according to the phraseology, that the eye-witnesses were not the same persons. But

at any rate, the writer only claims to have had perfect understanding, through communication with eye-witnesses, whether the value of his testimony is thereby lessened or not. He does not pretend to have been an eye-witness, and he challenges for his narrative no more than that it is a statement founded upon reports communicated to him by those who had seen. We are asked to take his statement not upon mere authority, but upon evidence. In the first chapter of the Acts, Peter proposes that some one who had companied with them from the beginning should be selected as a "witness" in the place of Judas. The necessity of proof and witnessing is recognised; it is acknowledged that evidence at first hand is more weighty than hearsay evidence; it was not enough, according to St. Peter, that some one should be able to say he had been told such or such a thing. A "witness" was wanted—a man who had heard and seen. The men and women of Nazareth were witnesses—had heard and seen certain things—and their testimony is totally at variance with that which proceeds from other persons, who only reported later traditions. Which evidence would a Court of Justice receive? What questions would it ask as to mysterious occurrences? Are they attested by persons who saw and heard—real witnesses? or are they vouched by those who only received them long after at second hand? In proportion to the uncommonness of an event must be the strength of the evidence upon which it is received.

Whether the story of the Trojan war is a true history or not, is a question of great literary interest. Whether the Iliad was the work of one man or of several, is an enquiry upon which opinions may differ, and a little clear evidence might turn the scale one way or other. But if we are asked to believe all the stories of all the gods who are brought upon the scene, we find it impossible to do so. Without casting any reflection upon anyone, or without asking whether the author himself believed, we say that

the things are intrinsically unbelievable, and we cannot be asked in any case to believe statements of this character without adequate evidence; such evidence as shall neutralise and overcome the inherent improbability of the matter submitted to us. That Homer composed in the Greek language we have no doubt; but that the Gospel of Matthew, or Mark, or Luke was originally written in Greek, and has never been added to or tampered with, may be more or less probable, but is not matter of proof.

In the interval between the crucifixion and the period when the Gospels were written, be that interval longer or shorter, a great change took place in the feelings, expectations, and belief of the apostles. We have seen that on the third day after the death of Jesus they regarded the report of his resurrection as an "idle tale." We have seen that not one of them ever spoke of his supernatural birth, or displayed any knowledge of the events which are said to have accompanied it. When they were asked what the people said of him, they replied that some said one thing and some another; and when they were asked, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter replied, "The Christ of God." What he meant by these words it is impossible to say, for he gave unequivocal evidence afterwards of his belief that Jesus had died as other men die, and that the report of his resurrection was an "idle tale." His verbal confession at one time, therefore, must be taken with his acts and sentiments at another. But here comes a critical point of the investigation. This confession of Peter was written by Luke long after the crucifixion, and long after much change had occurred in the apostle's feeling and faith. The Jewish nation had expected a Messiah—a Christ—and Jesus put to the apostles the question, "What think ye of Christ?" What are your feelings as to his person and office? We may be quite sure, from subsequent facts, that when this question was propounded they had no clear or definite view on the subject, and that the words which they made use of in reply conveyed

no such idea as they conveyed when St. Luke wrote his Gospel.

Luke's account of the journey to Emmaus proves how imperfectly disciples of Jesus (believers) apprehended what was meant by the word Christ. Jesus addressed the two travellers as "fools and slow of heart to believe," and said, "Ought not Christ to have suffered?" plainly indicating that their ideas of Christ were thoroughly mistaken; so that the words, "Thou art the Christ of God," might be a form of expression which had in it no meaning that was near the truth. That it meant to them at the time, a person who was "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made," is inconceivable, and cannot be true; and if the word did not mean this, what did it mean? "The apostles' creed," whilst Jesus sojourned with them on earth, was manifestly a wholly different thing from what it was when Luke wrote his Gospel. The historical language of Luke, that which discloses the state of the apostle's mind and belief at a given time, must be weighed and measured against that which comes in, by way of commentary afterwards. If it be true that the apostles, at the time of his death, believed that Jesus was mortal as they were, and regarded his resurrection as an "idle tale," in what respect were they believers more than others? Reading the Gospels considerately, with a view to answer this question, what do we find? Again and again we are told that people did not believe in Jesus; that his brethren did not believe in him. Did not believe—what?

In what particulars can it be shown that, at the time of the happening of these events, the belief of the apostles differed from that of the rest? They say after his death, "We trusted it had been he which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke xxiv. 21); and in the first chapter of the Acts (said to be written by Luke) they ask, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom unto Israel?" So that it is evident, up to the last moment, they clung

to the expectation of a temporal kingdom of some kind. When this Gospel of Luke, therefore, was written, the "apostles' creed" had very materially varied from what it was when the events happened which are described in the Gospel; and if we seek an answer from the apostles to the question, "What think ye of Christ?" we must ascertain from themselves what their state of mind was at the time, and distinguish between this and the comments made afterwards. There are in the narrative many expressions of wonder at the mighty works done by Jesus, and much surprise seems to have been felt at the unbelief which was manifested; but we are not told what it was that was disbelieved. If the people did not believe that Jesus was equal to the Father as touching the Godhead, neither, whilst he lived, did the apostles believe this. If the people believed that Jesus would die as other men, so did the apostles. If the people did not believe that Jesus would become a temporal king to deliver them from the Roman yoke, they apparently showed in this respect a better judgment than the apostles. And it is beyond measure surprising, after what is represented by Luke to have been done and said throughout the life and ministry of Jesus, that at last the apostles should have no other belief respecting him than that which it is proved they entertained upon the third day after his crucifixion.

Any expressions, therefore, in the narrative which are inconsistent with the state of mind disclosed by previous facts must be modified. Very remarkable are the words addressed to the travellers on the road to Emmaus—"Fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken"—not fools and slow of heart to believe and understand words and wonders heard and seen. Yet how pale are the words spoken by any prophets compared with the words spoken by Jesus himself—"never man spake like this man." And yet what he had said did not produce the belief that he was a divine person,

equal to the Father. These two disciples are reproached for their slowness of belief, because they had been unaffected by what the prophets had spoken; and yet they had probably seen Jesus raise the dead. The narrator says the world had come after him (John xii. 19); he had entered Jerusalem amid hosannas; miracles and wonders had been performed by him, and by others commissioned by him; and yet they are not reproached for their slowness of heart, in remaining uninfluenced by such manifestations of divine power as these, but because they did not apprehend ambiguous prophecies, couched in figurative and poetical language. It does seem strange that those two disciples should have seen and heard what Luke describes, and should have remained ignorant of Christ's mission and character, and should be blamed, not for this, but because they misunderstood obscure prophecies, which they might have only heard in the synagogue, and, moreover, have understood as there expounded. How are we to explain the fact that these two men knew Jesus of Nazareth, knew that he "was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people," and yet did not get beyond this belief? though much more than this is asserted in the narrative. They confess that the women "made them astonished" by the report that Jesus "was alive." How could they be "astonished," unless, indeed, they had adopted the taunt of the Jews—"He saved others, himself he cannot save"? How could they be unimpressed by a prophet, mighty in deed and word, and be expected to interpret truly obscure prophecies which might never have been expounded to them?

Surely if the Pharisees took precautions against the resurrection, or removal, of Jesus—remembering his words—the disciples must have had some comprehension of them, must have conversed about them, and could not be "astonished" when they heard that he was alive; and yet, so far as the narrative informs us, this was the state of mind of them all. Once more we ask, what up to the

moment of his resurrection was the difference between the belief of the apostles respecting Jesus and the belief of those who were not his followers? It is easy to treat such a question with indifference and contempt; much easier than it is to give a satisfactory answer to it. John sent disciples to ask Jesus, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" and the answer is, "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard." (Luke vii. 22.) These were to convince him, though he had not seen and heard; and yet "believers" who had both seen and heard "rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre and departed." "He called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases; and the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done." (Luke ix. 1.) Immediately after this, Luke tells us that Jesus asked his disciples, "Whom say the people that I am?" Peter replies, "The Christ of God." And he straightly charged them and commanded them to tell no man that thing: saying, "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be slain, and rise again the third day."

"Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spit on, and they shall scourge him, and put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things that were spoken."

That twelve men could be found who did not understand what it was to be mocked, spitefully entreated, spitted on, scourged, and put to death, is incomprehensible; and even more unintelligible is it, that when within a short time all these things happened to him who uttered the warning, the twelve men, being his friends,

should remember nothing of it, should not in any way be influenced by it, should embalm his dead body, roll a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and utterly disbelieve that he had risen from the dead. "There was a strife among them which of them should be accounted greatest." (Luke xxii. 24.) At that time, just prior to the crucifixion, if the apostles had been asked, "What think ye of Christ," how would they have answered? The evidence conclusively proves that to the very last they looked for a temporal kingdom, and that, in the supreme moment of their Master's fate, "there was a strife among them which should be greatest"—in that kingdom.

There have been manifold and bitter contentions, cruel and ruthless persecutions have been perpetrated, because men differed as to the answer which should be given to the question, "What think ye of Christ?" We appeal to the twelve men who saw and heard much more than we can ever be acquainted with; we put aside remarks and commentaries made many years after; and we ask, whilst Jesus lived amongst them, what was their belief respecting him? What matters it that men a hundred years afterwards asserted one thing or another? What does it matter that three hundred years later Bishops met in Council at Nicea, under the presidency of such an one as Constantine, and solemnly affirmed after what manner Jesus was born? What is the evidence of contemporary inhabitants of Nazareth? And which evidence is the best? What is to be known upon the subject is contained in a book, and is matter of fact dependent on testimony of witnesses. One of the men who wrote a declaration of the things most surely believed respecting the birth and death of Jesus—which is the foundation of all the superstructure of Christian creeds—tells us that "things" were delivered unto him by persons who were eye-witnesses. This is the whole authority which he claims on behalf of what he writes; and no number

of men coming after him can reverse real facts or create new evidence. Facts concerning the birth and parentage of a man are to be ascertained by investigations, and admissions, and concurrence of opinion made in the place, and among the people where he was brought up. What can be proved of a man's origin by the people who knew his history and surroundings from his youth, are reckoned to be facts which no mere rumours and representations made long after can invalidate or disprove. They are evidences of a higher quality, and they command the assent of all men who know the value of evidence.

Alexander the Great might tell the Persians that he was the son of Jupiter, and those ignorant people might believe it; and if they had written his history, they might have asserted, and the people in Persia who read the history might have believed it; but the Greeks, who had known Alexander from his youth, were not likely to believe it; and the assertions of men who had no means of knowing facts are as nothing when weighed against the evidence of others who had means and opportunities of becoming acquainted with them.

The case then stands thus: We have a narrative compiled by writers who were not eye-witnesses of what they relate—for there is no evidence that any one of the writers knew Jesus of Nazareth until he was over thirty years of age. They knew nothing, therefore of his birth and childhood. St. Luke expressly limits his own knowledge to "things" "delivered unto" him by "eye-witnesses." He asserts that he had "perfect understanding," derived from others who had evidence as "eye-witnesses," of things which he records. When, therefore, we come upon events of which we are quite certain these persons were not "eye-witnesses," the test fails, and we are left without the evidence which the writer admits to be needful. There is no claim by St. Luke to supernatural knowledge. What he knew came to him, as

he declares, through ordinary channels of information, and came to him very long after the occurrences which he describes. He provides us himself with a canon to test the narrative which he has compiled. He was told certain things, and he believed them. He does not allege that he had supernatural guidance. He affirms that he was told by an eye-witness what had happened. He admits that he has no higher or more authoritative testimony than this, and where this fails the narrative must stand or fall by its own inherent and internal consistency and probability and coherence.

There are imbedded in the narrative certain statements which (if true) must have been known to the people amongst whom Jesus of Nazareth was born and brought up. But, according to the narrative itself, not one of these statements is made, or alluded to, by any of the persons who were acquainted with Jesus of Nazareth during his childhood, youth, or manhood. A statement of his miraculous birth is found in the narrative, but it is clear that this is a statement lying outside the testimony of "the eye-witnesses" to whom St. Luke was indebted for his information. We turn, therefore, to his own narrative, and to the narrative of those who, like himself, had taken in hand, to set forth in order, a declaration of things believed amongst them; and it then appears that, instead of there being any knowledge of a supernatural birth in the place where the mother of Jesus lived amongst her own people, every particle of evidence which the narrative contains proves that, then and there, Jesus was regarded by everyone as the son of Joseph and Mary. It is proved that his mother, in the most natural and unaffected manner, publicly acknowledged Joseph as his father; moreover, that he was so announced to his disciples; that he lived thirty years in and about Nazareth as the son of Joseph; that he left the place for a short time, and on his return was greeted by everyone as the son of Joseph and Mary.

The narrative is clear and precise, and natural in all that relates to the parentage and family of Jesus; and the writer—be he who he may—puts the matter beyond controversy by an incidental and casual admission, which is of more value than any tradition or superstitions of a later day. He says, “Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph.” (Luke iii. 23.) He was supposed to be the son of Joseph just as other individuals are supposed to be the children of those married persons under whose shelter and protection they are born and nurtured; who never repudiate the parentage, but acknowledge it and discharge its duties; living in the midst of their own people who know all their circumstances. The evidence of such facts is not to be invalidated by subsequent statements, the authenticity of which cannot be verified. The testimony of Luke is unimpeachable. He tells us that during at least thirty years of his life Jesus was regarded as the son of Joseph. How could such an impression arise, and how can it be refuted?

The evidence of St. Matthew, who did not know Jesus until after his thirtieth year, corroborates this conclusion, for, in a genealogical statement, he says—“Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.” (Matt. i. 16.) If the writer of these words meant to deny the paternity of Joseph he adopted a mode of expression certain to be misunderstood. If, on the other hand, he meant that the husband of Mary was the father of her son Jesus, who is called Christ, then he expressed the fact in a perfectly simple and natural manner.

We know from the narratives how Jesus of Nazareth was regarded during his lifetime by those who had the best means of knowing him. We have the admission of his mother, we have the assertion of his neighbours, and we have the clear statements of his biographers, that he was, without any exception, thought (*ἐνομιζέτο*) to

be the son of Joseph. No hint whatever is given of anyone having suggested anything to the contrary. How unaccountable upon any other supposition is the remark of Mary when she had reproved him for absenting himself—"Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." To which he replies—"How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? *And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.*" What!—not understand this simple remark of a child who had been ushered into the world in the mysterious manner known to Mary—if known? Is it conceivable that a woman who had discoursed with an angel, as Mary is represented to have done, should not understand words like these?

Let us look back once more to the reported interview between the angel and Mary; let us remember what is related of Joseph; and then ask ourselves whether it is possible they should not understand so simple an expression as that which Jesus had uttered. Again, let us ask, whether it is possible that the disciples and apostles of Jesus could have been acquainted with the miraculous birth, and the many wonders connected with it, and yet, when Jesus was crucified, that a great stone should be rolled to the door of the sepulchre; and that when his resurrection is announced they should not only disbelieve it, but treat it as an "idle tale." If the resurrection was to them but an idle tale, how could they ever have known of the miraculous birth? The resurrection was surely a matter easy of belief to persons who knew of the miraculous birth. Plainly the apostles at the time of the crucifixion did not know of the miraculous birth and of all that has since been connected with it.

That these narratives should be tested by the ordinary rules of evidence, and not accepted as supernatural, is plain from admissions made by the writers themselves. Not only does Luke appeal for his facts to eye-witnesses, but Peter says, after the death of Judas, that some person

must be appointed in his stead "to be a witness"; and it must, he asserts, "be some person who has companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, *beginning from the baptism of John.*" (Acts i. 22). Mark this limitation of time. Antecedent to the baptism of John there is thus no testimony of witnesses. For a "witness" is a person who has seen and heard that which is asserted; having, by actual auditory and visual means, become acquainted with facts. In the twenty-sixth chapter of the Acts, Paul says, that on his journey to Damascus, the "voice" which he heard announced that he was to be "a witness" of the things which he had then seen, and of those which might hereafter appear. This is the common test by which men govern their affairs. The transactions of life are constantly brought to this standard. "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled" (1 John i. 1), settles and determines every disputable point which arises in the business of life. "This thing," says St. Paul, "was not done in a corner" (Acts xxvi. 26): implying that facts are worthy of belief in proportion to the light and publicity under which they have been performed, and that when they are "done in a corner" they may, if obscure and improbable, fairly and justly be doubted. The common sense of mankind acknowledges the rectitude of this rule; recognises that the parentage of children cannot be impeached, except by witnesses and evidence sufficient to overturn all natural presumption, and all the proceedings which mark and discriminate the conduct of real parents and of the persons amongst whom they have lived. The history and conduct of two persons, and of their neighbours, is the foundation of that law and practice which determines the parentage of children. These are the "witnesses" whose evidence is not to be gainsaid.

There is so much of reverential and devotional feeling

connected with the history we have been considering that very many persons would rather not look into it, if, as the result of doing so, they are likely to find it not authentic. They are content, without enquiry, to believe what they have been taught. There is something to be said for such a feeling; but, though it is justified by some sort of reasoning, it is essentially immoral.

The belief of all mankind is not proof against evidence which contradicts it. All mankind believed that the sun moved, and that the earth was a plane surface and did not move. This belief is proved to have been wrong. At the time of the Reformation it must have been hard and painful to reject cherished beliefs which had been received as essential to salvation. But men did this. They were a small minority, and they fell under the bitter malediction of those from whom they separated themselves; but as time went on, and their numbers increased, they gained courage and confidence, and the fear and the faint-heartedness passed away; and the beliefs persecuted at the Reformation have now got a firm hold upon the mind, and the denunciations of the olden times are disregarded. All beliefs are founded upon some sort of reasons. Persons who are ever ready to revile rationalism are themselves rationalists to a limited extent. If their beliefs are assailed they have something to say for them. If they are Romanists, they hold certain dogmas because for some reason they believe their priests. If, on the other hand, they are Protestants, they hold a special creed because they think it is true. They have all and each exercised their faculties and feelings more or less, and well or ill, in the matter of their creed. The man who "worships ignorantly," worships in some sort nevertheless, and is mostly unconscious of his ignorance; but he is not the less certain that he is right. Protestants—the descendants of those who parted company with their co-religionists at the Reformation—should remember the obloquy which was then heaped upon their predecessors.

The persecutors of the Reformation had more justification than the petty persecutors of the present time—the Protestants who, having reasoned themselves out of Romanism, would arrest the progress of reason, or revile with bitter words those who are forced by an irresistible conviction to carry further the principles upon which the Reformation was founded. At the Reformation a man rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, and because he did so, he was threatened with eternal damnation. He persevered notwithstanding, because he could not believe what seemed to him contradictory and absurd. The very faculty of believing is violated and outraged by the admission of what is regarded as an absurdity.

“How can they believe,” asks St. Paul, “in him of whom they have not heard?” There are conditions of believing quite as unmanageable and impracticable as that which St. Paul proposes. He implies that in certain cases belief is not possible—the materials out of which it is to be shaped do not exist. But if the materials offered to us refuse to coalesce, if they are utterly refractory and cannot be combined, then St. Paul’s question is strictly applicable—“How can they believe?” The man who proposes the belief is but a man, subject to like passions with other men. Multiply him by three hundred, or by any number of hundreds, call him and his colleagues what you will, you have not lifted him or them out of that slough of despond, that bog of doubt and difficulty, in which human nature finds itself. They cannot alter the nature of facts, and they cannot alter the nature of that evidence which is needed for the proof of facts.

Not many years ago an Œcumenical Council decreed that the mother of Jesus was not conceived in sin, as others are said to be, but was of immaculate conception. This may be believed, so long as the positive assertions of men, ignorant of a fact, pass for proof. Councils may

asseverate; they cannot make that to be a fact which is not so, nor annihilate a fact which exists. Dr. S. R. Maitland* says:—"Let it be remembered, to reflecting readers such remarks may seem trite and commonplace; but for the sake of others I do not like to omit the suggestion—that whatsoever God has allowed to exist, or to be done, is an eternal fact—that it has become part of everlasting and immutable truth—that nothing subsequent can alter it."

The facts recorded in the New Testament—miraculous or otherwise—must be known and authenticated as other facts, before they can properly be believed. To say that a man believes them, who has only received them inertly and unintelligently, is a solecism; and no number of men so receiving them add one iota to their validity; no generations of men do it, and no Councils can establish as a fact that which is not so. They may collect evidence and weigh it, they cannot dispense with it; they may conclude for their own time, but not for all time; and no dogmas respecting matters of fact which are based upon fables can ultimately prevail. They may be propagated by fire and sword; they may triumph by the agency of dungeons and darkness; but the time will come when force and brutality will fail, and when the questions must be reopened and sifted, which have been shut up and sealed by arbitrary power.

From the time of Theodosius the Great, through very many centuries, no man could safely dispute the orthodox creed. He could not do it even in very recent times. He cannot do it comfortably even now. Ecclesiastics of the highest rank, who are themselves charged with heresy, are still ready to apply opprobrious epithets to those whose conscience will not allow them to embrace the popular creeds. Those conscientious persons may be wrong. They are obviously in hosts of cases honest and sincere, and they are admitted to be not less useful members of

* Eight Essays.

society than those who revile them. They possess no pecuniary endowments to bias their judgment; they desire to live soberly, righteously, and godly; but they cannot believe that which revolts and confounds their understanding. It is not pride of intellect which influences them. Humbly and reverently they acknowledge the narrowness of their powers, and they feel that these are utterly inadequate to draw the vast conclusions which the orthodox pronounce with so much facility and boldness. Of things visible and palpable men have arduously and slowly made conquest; of the things invisible and supernatural they have easily (as it seems) obtained the mastery. When they were profoundly ignorant of the solar system, they were apparently quite familiar with the ways and counsels and nature and substance of Him who was before all things, and by whom all things consist. (Col. i. 17.) On the very threshold of their polity they were confronted with the question—"Canst thou by searching find out God?" And yet, when a man doubted or denied some marvellous proposition which they had excogitated respecting this great Being, they racked him, or burned him, or let loose upon an unoffending people, who had no metaphysics, a blood-thirsty and ruthless soldiery. Because a man could not believe what appeared to be absurd, and was honest enough to say so, he was deprived of the common rights of humanity; and only after hard, bitter, and protracted struggles has this Catholic and unrelenting spirit been partially subdued and cast out.

Who were the parents of some particular person, is a matter of fact, to be ascertained by rules of evidence which have grown up under the teaching of experience. Society has worked out for itself, upon this question, methods of proof which are clear and simple, and which cannot be set aside by unverifiable traditions and dogmatism. That a man lived from infancy to manhood with persons of unblemished character, calling themselves his

parents, that his neighbours and friends knew him as their child, and that every person with whom he came into contact so regarded him, is a chain of circumstances final and conclusive; and which, if it could be impeached by mere reports circulated many years afterwards, by persons having no real knowledge of these events, would shake and disturb the very foundations of society.

Proof is of different kinds and clearness, and men have to be satisfied with less in one case than in another. Individuals are convicted of crimes upon what is called circumstantial evidence; and lives are forfeited and property is alienated, and the affairs of the world are transacted with satisfaction, and of necessity, upon evidence of this description. The legitimacy of a person is proved by those circumstances which are the staple—the warp and weft—of every-day life. The habits of people, and how they live together; what is the common opinion and belief respecting them, founded upon observation and knowledge extending over many years—these are facts convincing and decisive. The quibbles and refinements of captious objectors have no weight in practical affairs. That persons are born in the natural course of generation is taken for granted, unless some overwhelming proof of the contrary is produced; and when all the actual circumstances known to us, or known to anyone, are upon the side of what is customary and common, then the unnatural and the abnormal lose all credibility.

The “judicious Hooker” furnishes a canon on this subject which may most appropriately close this discussion. He says:—“Now, it is not required, nor can it be exacted at our hands, that we should yield unto anything other assent than such as doth answer the evidence which is to be had of that we assent unto. . . . The truth is, that how bold and confident soever we may be in words, when it cometh to the point of trial, such as

the evidence is, which the truth hath either in itself or through proof, such is the heart's assent thereunto; neither can it be stronger, being grounded as it should be."*

* "Ecclesiastical Polity," Book II., ch. vii., 5.

THE JOURNEY TO EMMAUS.

“Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?”—*Luke* xii. 57.

“Prove all things.”—*1 Thess.* v. 21.

AFTER reading the painful narrative that closes at the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth we come upon the journey to Emmaus with a feeling of relief. We leave the murky atmosphere of Jerusalem, the sanctimonious and vindictive rulers, and the brutal and unfeeling mob, with a sense of satisfaction: the fierce passions which have struck down and trampled upon their most gentle victim are no longer obtruded upon us. The rocky and winding road to Emmaus, its green slopes and graceful trees, the clear air and the bright sunshine, are in grateful contrast to the roar of the city multitudes, the dark tragedy of the crucifixion, and the profound mournfulness of the tomb: the exhilarating scene brings with it other and pleasanter thoughts; and though we may never in fact have made the journey to Emmaus, we must often have pictured to ourselves the aspect of the road and the rustic and homely appearance of the village which has acquired so imperishable an attraction.

The two disciples to whom Luke introduces us may have assisted at the entombment of Jesus; they would then keep the Sabbath, and did not set out on their journey till after midday; for the distance between Jerusalem and Emmaus is about seven miles, and when they arrived, it was towards evening, and the day was far spent. And who were these disciples? The name of one is given—it was Cleopas; nothing further is known of him.

There was a Cleophas, the husband of that Mary, who stood beside the cross along with her sister Mary, the mother of Jesus; and the Cleopas who was walking to Emmaus may have been the same person: but this is not certain. His companion has never been clearly identified. It has been conjectured that he was Luke, and many other suggestions have been made, but none is supported by any evidence. Of this, however, we may be sure, that they were, one or both, persons of consideration; faithful and firm men, steadfast in friendship and not shaken by adversity; for Jesus himself chose them as his companions under circumstances of indescribable interest. They had tarried in Jerusalem until the third day after the crucifixion, and they then turned their backs upon the city and took the road to Emmaus. They could talk only of the sad scenes they had witnessed, and of their blighted hopes; and the sadness which was in their hearts might be seen in their countenances; for "as they talked together of all the things that had happened," a stranger drew near and joined them; and he noticed that they were sad, and he asked, "What manner of conversation is this that ye have with one another as ye walk and are sad?" And Cleopas, wondering that anyone should be travelling from Jerusalem just then who did not know what had happened there, replied, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" And the stranger answers, "What things?" The reply is given in the plural number,—they said unto him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." This is the sum of their knowledge; and the source of their sorrow is that the chief priests and rulers had condemned him to death and crucified him; whereas they had trusted that it was he which should have redeemed Israel.

Here we have a short and decisive summary of what these affectionate friends and followers of Jesus thought of his actions and of his history, as they walked

to Emmaus on the afternoon of the third day after he was crucified. We may be quite sure they knew all that Jesus began both to do and teach until the day on which he was crucified (Acts i. 1, 2); they had witnessed his miracles and heard his words; and as they talked now, so they had talked before, of the wonderful things they had seen and heard. And meeting with this stranger, in their sad and tender mood, they tell him who it was they mourned for—Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet mighty in word and deed. This was the measure of their knowledge and of their feeling; they trusted it had been he which should have redeemed Israel from the galling yoke of the Romans; their patriotism was disappointed, the sceptre seemed finally to have departed, and their grief was not alone for the tender and gentle friend who had been their companion and teacher, and who had suffered a cruel death; but it was the blasting of a hope to which they had clung for their nation,—the glory and triumph of another David. We cannot be mistaken in our conclusions on this subject: if human words have any meaning, and if the language of human hearts can ever be understood, the words of these travellers are of no uncertain signification. Whoever they might be, they were true men, and they tell us what the impression was which they had derived from their intercourse with Jesus of Nazareth;—He was a prophet mighty in word and deed.

We ought to consider what the effect of a miracle may be at one era of the world and at another; that is, what effect it would have upon the minds of those who witnessed it. Clearly the Egyptians who saw the miracles of Moses and of the magicians, would infer that they were each a manifestation of the same power: the divinities who gave their assistance were regarded as of the same nature; one might be more potent than the other, but they were not of different orders. And so, when the Syrians said the gods of Israel were gods of the hills and not of the valleys, they acknowledged gods many and lords many; and this was

the common belief. Miracles, therefore, works of power in aid of their worshippers, were expected and looked for; and so with the Jews, their history teemed with miracles, worked at sundry times and in divers manners. God, as they thought, had at various periods of their history, in many ways and by different persons, interferred in their behalf; and they were also taught, as we may see from their books, that evil spirits also worked miracles. If devils were cast out, as they did not deny, Beelzebub might have the credit of the deed; and therefore miracles were not such marvels as they would be reckoned in our days. Let a miracle be performed now in the face of the fiercest criticism, let it be tested by the keenest scrutiny, and let it stand out clear and unimpeachable, its enemies being judges (Deut. xxxii. 31), and the effect would be much more startling than it would have been in the time of Jesus. If we believe that Beelzebub can cast out devils, then the evidence of miracles is ambiguous; and the man who sees them and tells us of them is not more exact and careful in his narrative than a man who describes an ordinary event. A man who was told that it had rained for twelve hours in any part of England at any period of the year need not disbelieve it,—the statement might be true; if he were told that twelve inches of rain fell in the time, he might require some further evidence than the mere word of an unskilled informant; but if a man residing in a tropical climate were told that rain had fallen for twelve consecutive hours, at a season when rain was never known to fall, he would expect some very trustworthy and precise evidence before he believed it. And so a man who regarded miracles as common things would need no special evidence of their occurrence; he would think it likely enough that they should happen, for had they not often occurred before? and he would not necessarily think the worker of them greater than man, inasmuch as men had frequently worked them; neither would miracles prove to

such a man that he who performed them was certainly better than other men, seeing that Balaam and other prophets are stigmatized as unrighteous persons. What is the previous state of a man's mind in whose presence miracles are performed, must be dispassionately weighed before we can estimate them aright. "The simple believeth every word; but the prudent man looketh well to his going" (Proverbs xiv. 15). Believing every word is characteristic of the simple, and he who looketh well to his going is prudent; to look well or carefully about one is to avoid being taken in by mere appearance, by mere statements without evidence. We do not say, miracles have not happened, but the simple we say believe every word, and that as very many written and spoken words are not true they must believe much that is false. Persons are often commended because they believe readily whatever is told them. Such a state of mind is regarded as meritorious; to believe improbable and inconsistent and out-of-the-way things is reckoned by some to be a peculiarly Christian-like attribute. Solomon, however, calls persons of this sort simple; and the simple in his phraseology are only one remove from the silly. We come, then, to this, that miracles to the men of a particular age may not be proofs of a Divine mission nor yet of a Divine character.

Let us return to the travellers on the road to Emmaus. We get at the fountain head of their thought and feeling as they talk and are sad; whatever wonder had been excited by the works of Jesus, whatever emotion had been stirred up by his words, and whatever marvels had been otherwise associated with his name, we can now see the extent and effect of them, we can observe the impression which they had left on the mind and heart of these two constant and reflective friends. At such a moment every line of the portrait so recently "marred" would be deepened, and every feeling connected with it hallowed and purified; and we may be quite sure that we get the

clear outcome of their experience and observation as they discourse with the stranger who overtook them on their journey. And they tell him,—what? That Jesus of Nazareth was a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people—not, in the language of the Nicene Creed, that He was God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God. Not a word of this do they utter.

We know what the answer is, but it is no answer; Jesus had formerly said to his disciples, “Believe me for the very works’ sake” (John xiv. 11); and again, “If I had not done among them the works which none other man did they had not had sin” (John xv. 24). The works referred to were clear and convincing, such as would compel belief,—but belief of what? The greatest fact of all, the one without which the Christian creed as subsequently developed would be as nothing, is—that Jesus is equal to the Father as touching the Godhead; and yet these two disciples, who would then have been reckoned believers, evidently knew nothing of it.

Let us consider the meaning of the word “believers” as employed in the New Testament. In the Gospel of John (xii. 42) we are told, many of the chief rulers believed; and in a previous chapter it is asked, “Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed?” And we naturally ask—believed what? what is the proposition or thing they are said to believe or disbelieve? Primarily we should say, that he was the Christ, the expected Messiah; this would be shortly what their thoughts turned upon. “Whom do men say that I am?” inquires Jesus. And he is told, Some said one thing, and some another; and he asks, “But whom say ye? what think ye of Christ?”

These were the questions that were moving men’s minds; and when believers are spoken of, it must be meant believers of some such circumstance as this. But then we must go further, and ask—what the opinion was of Messiah? what was the expectation of the Jews concerning him? History enables us to answer this question: we

are not dependent upon subsequent changes of thought ; we can get our materials at first hand. The travellers to Emmaus give us the information :—“ We thought it had been he which should have redeemed Israel ” ; the mighty works he had done pointed him out as the Messiah—the Redeemer of Israel from the bondage of Rome ; it was a matter of reproach to some that “ though he had done so many miracles before them yet they believed not on him ” (John xii. 37). Again we say,—believed what ? In the same chapter it is represented that the populace of Jerusalem received him with branches of palm-trees and with cries of “ Hosanna ! blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. ” Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, “ This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. ” When Jesus, therefore, perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king he departed (John vi. 14, 15). Here the two ideas are blended together,—the prophet that should come into the world—the Messiah, distinguished by his miracles, being compelled to accept the kingly office for which he was designed. And after the resurrection, “ being assembled together, ” “ they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ? ” (Acts i. 6). This agrees exactly with the view entertained by Cleopas and his companion—“ We trusted it had been he that should have redeemed Israel. ” This then, is what they believed, with more or less clearness and definiteness ; this was their hope and expectation ; it is so written, plainly and conspicuously in the history, and it is gathered from the private communication of the personal attendants and disciples of Jesus. With wavering faith they clung to this hope,—at some moments, their hopes were strong and buoyant ; at others, they were feeble and flickering. We may form some opinion of the simplicity—in Solomon’s sense—of the Jewish people at that time, when we mark the foolishness of their political ideas, how they

expected that an unarmed peasantry, led by a teacher like Jesus, could overturn the Roman power, and establish an independent monarchy. They had listened to the glowing poetry of psalmists and prophets, who depicted the glories of their people and their land; until they dreamed that the hour had come, and the Man. What these brilliant pictures particularly pointed to, they did not inquire; they had a general notion that another kingdom like that of David was to be established, and that they were once more to become the favoured and conquering people of the Lord. How opposite to all this has been their fate we know; and we may measure their national wisdom and foresight by the utter collapse of their dream.

Our conclusions on this subject are derived exclusively from the history, and not from comments and observations made long afterwards; we are able to see into the thoughts and expectations of the people; they tell us by their acts what they think and mean; and we interpret the words which are written by the commentary which the events furnish. Jesus had died upon the cross when these disciples were journeying to Emmaus; his life on earth was over; and we can estimate from their remarks what impression it had left behind. They evidently had no expectation that he would rise from the dead; they had heard of the angels and of the state of the tomb before they left Jerusalem; but the news was not of a kind to arrest their journey. "Certain women of our company made us astonished." Their intercourse with Jesus had not led them to look for his resurrection; when the intelligence was first conveyed to the eleven it is said, the words of the women seemed "as idle tales." More contemptuous terms could hardly be applied to any story, When the resurrection of Jesus is related to the eleven apostles by the two Maries, and Joanna, who had come straight from the tomb—their words seemed as "idle tales." The teaching of Jesus had not, therefore, impressed them with the expectation that he would rise from the

dead; and when they are told by women whom they had long known they treated the information as an idle tale. Now, it is very strange that the chief priests and Pharisees took another view of the situation; for they are represented to have said to Pilate, "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say to the people, he is risen from the dead. And the last error shall be worse than the first" (Matt. xxvii. 63). This is certainly remarkable; that his enemies should have heard and understood this prediction, and that his disciples were utterly in the dark about it. Cleopas had no expectation that he would rise again, had no remembrance of any words that foretold it; they "trusted"—which implies their trust no longer existed. How are we to explain this? and how did Matthew become acquainted with this particular conversation between Pilate and the chief priests? and is it at all probable that the chief priests should remember what his own disciples who had " companied " with him all the years of his ministry had so utterly forgotten? What we read in the Gospels was written years after the journey to Emmaus. We know something of the state of mind of the two travellers; they had made no forecasts like the chief priests; but what is it that is written on the subject of the resurrection, and said to have been spoken before this journey to Emmaus? There are plain warnings reported in the sayings of Jesus. Let us look at one or two.

There are two distinct occasions on which Jesus appears to speak very plainly, indeed, on the subject. The three synoptic Gospels record them. We will take that of Mark in the 8th chapter:—"And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders and of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed and after three days rise again.

And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him and began to rebuke him (Matthew adds, saying "Be it far from Thee, Lord"). But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, 'Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God but the things that be of men.'" This takes place before the transfiguration in the region of Cesarea Philippi. Is it probable, is it possible, that Peter should have forgotten this remarkable incident? Then later in the history, when they were going up to Jerusalem not long before the Crucifixion, it is said by Matthew (chap. xx), "Jesus took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said to them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge ('spitted upon' adds Luke) and to crucify him; and the third day he shall rise again." Luke adds, "They understood none of these things." This, again, is most remarkable; the chief priests, it seems, understood, and it is inconceivable that having had this warning so recently and having had it formerly, it should have left no impression on their minds. They are on their way to Jerusalem, and he advertises them of what should come to pass there; they see him, awhile after, delivered to the chief priests and to the Gentiles; condemned, mocked, scourged, spitted on; crucified, just as he had told them;—but the rising from the dead is utterly forgotten. It was not many days after he had warned them that they saw the beginning of the end, every single prediction was being exactly fulfilled; and it is a miracle of forgetfulness and inattentiveness that when they see each act of the dark tragedy unfolding itself, and closing with the tomb, they never remember that when he predicted his fall, as they witnessed it, he foretold his rising again. That his words did not impress them while they did induce the

chief priests to adopt precautionary measures, is indeed wonderful; that they who had seen more than one or two persons return from the dead—had seen the widow of Nain's son, the daughter of Jairus, snatched from the grave, and then the solemn, scenic, and recent resurrection of Lazarus—that they should, with these events stamped upon their memories, lose all recollection of what Jesus had said respecting his own resurrection; nay, that their first thought when they were told of it, should be that it is an idle tale—this is indeed a mystery wholly inscrutable. That they should not understand plain words of such unequivocal import, after they had been so long with Jesus, heard from him so much, seen Peter so sternly rebuked when he deprecated his sufferings and death, and then marked step by step the doom he had foretold, without one thought of the promised triumph, and which they treat as an idle tale when it is told them;—this is a state of mind mysterious and unparalleled, and so we leave it; at any rate that which is demonstrated by other evidence is corroborated by this—they did not believe that Jesus was equal to the Father as touching the Godhead; for they believed he was mortal and had irrevocably died.

But the circumstance that is related of the chief priests deserves further consideration. Matthew says (xxviii. 11-15), “Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.” He does not say until which day, whether the note was made fifty or a hundred years after the event.

Now let us consider the facts. Matthew had previously told us, "Behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, and for fear of him the keepers did shake and became as dead men." It is not said at what hour this happened; but the women—"very early in the morning" (Mark xvi. 2), "when it was yet dark" (John xx. 2)—came to the sepulchre, and found the stone rolled away. So that it occurred earlier and while it was dark. The keepers, being in such great fear, would, no doubt, make their escape into the city; but this is not mentioned till later. Now, what would be the conduct of these men after so terrible a visitation—the great earthquake and the angel? Surely they would have sought out their comrades and told them. The soldiers had taken an active part in the cruelties of the crucifixion day. Soldiers are said to have crucified him, and parted his garments; soldiers broke the legs of the crucified thieves, and one pierced the side of Jesus with a spear. They must also have heard of the terrors that occurred around them; for there was the darkness, and it is said "the earth did quake and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened." These tidings must have come to their ears or have been witnessed by them. Such men are usually superstitious; and these startling phenomena must have worked upon their fears, and those who were selected for the night watch must have been acquainted with the fact that they were to guard the tomb of him at whose death such strange manifestations took place. Jesus had lately come into Jerusalem with popular acclamations; and his trial and execution were notorious events; the soldiers, therefore, must have known what their duty was. Two malefactors had been crucified, and with them, one called the King of the Jews, about whom a great stir had been made. These extraordinary events must have impressed

even their rude natures; and as they took their station at the tomb some sort of superstitious awe must have affected them; and then when there was another "great earthquake," and the fearful apparition of an angel, whose face was like lightning, they might well shake and become as dead. They would lose no time in returning to their quarters, and they would certainly acquaint their comrades and their friends with what had happened. That they should go at so unseasonable an hour to the chief priests is improbable. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that some considerable interval elapsed before the "chief priests assembled with the elders and took counsel." The story must have got abroad; the soldiers would be eager to tell what they had seen—such men always take pleasure in reporting anything remarkable that happens to them. The money of the chief priests would therefore come too late; we say nothing of the bungling invention that the soldiers were to tell what took place when they were asleep. Nevertheless, the historian says they took the money, and did as they were taught; and the story prospered and survived "until" some distant "day." The improbabilities of it are, indeed, many and great. The contest with the chief priests was not concluded. A little while after these events, the priests, the captain of the Temple, and the Sadducees, came upon Peter and John as they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead (Acts iv. 1); and on the morrow their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem; and before them Peter and John were arraigned and put upon their defence, and they alleged that the miracle they had performed was done "in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead." Here was a direct challenge, and the obvious answer of the Court would be:—This representation will

not deceive us; we have here the deposition of the soldiers, which declares that the disciples of Jesus came by night and stole him away. Is it conceivable that this story, so well known, as to be recited by Matthew, and for which the chief priests had paid so liberally, should not have been made use of? The Court discovered that Peter and John had been with Jesus; the soldiers had been bribed to account for his disappearance; and in full Court, in the presence of all their great authorities, these "unlearned and ignorant men" assert that God had raised Jesus from the dead. Surely the answer would have been ready, "We have proof that you stole him away." Not many days after this occurrence the same apostles are again in custody, and again brought before the council, who charge them that they have filled Jerusalem with their doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us; and they reply, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree." Here, again, the answer would be prompt and plain if it were in existence—"Ye stole the body of Jesus!" But no word of this kind is uttered. And Gamaliel was of this council, a Pharisee and a doctor of the law, had in reputation of all the people: while Joseph of Arimathea, "an honourable councillor, who had not consented to the counsel and deed of them" (Luke xxiii. 51); and "Nicodemus, a master of Israel, a man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews" (John iii. 1), were both actively engaged on behalf of Jesus. Is it to be believed that this conspiracy of the chief priests and rulers to bribe the soldiers should not come to the ears of any of them? and is it likely that so potent a weapon should not have been employed by them? Gamaliel pleaded the cause of the apostles in words of reason and moderation; but had he known of this plot would he have concealed it? If the true story had been told by the soldiers and the fabricated one by the chief priests, Gamaliel must have heard of it; Nicodemus would have known it, and Joseph of Arimathea

also; and would the apostles not have taunted their accusers with the fraud and perfidy they had perpetrated? The apostles are charged with filling Jerusalem with their doctrine, that Jesus had risen from the dead; and the chief priests, so apt at producing false witness (Mark xiv. 56), could have produced the testimony of the soldiers, if they possessed it; or, if it was abroad or current, the apostles would have appealed to it, and convicted their enemies out of their own mouths. It is not possible to believe that the story as presented to us has the image and superscription of truth upon it. If the story had been in existence when the apostles were brought to trial, the chief priests, who had bought so fatal a piece of evidence would have produced it to the discomfiture of the apostles; and if the soldiers had received the "large money" they were not like other soldiers if, as they spent the money in their usual haunts, they did not tell their comrades how they came into possession of it. As the apostles filled Jerusalem with their doctrine, the talk of the soldiers and their store of money would tell the tale of the chief priest's treachery, and the apostles would not be slow to avail themselves of it. We have seen that the soldiers returned from the sepulchre very early in the morning; the two travellers to Emmaus, though they did not leave Jerusalem till past noon, and had heard of the angels appearing to the women, had heard nothing of the discomfiture of the soldiers or of the earthquake. Again, the language of Peter on the day of Pentecost and all through the period corresponds with that of the travellers to Emmaus. In his first public utterance he says, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by Him in the midst of you." No man could use this language in its natural sense, respecting one whom he believed to be equal to the Father as touching the Godhead. But this evidence of Peter's state of mind can be strengthened by further unequivocal proof.

The last command given by Jesus to his disciples as recorded by Matthew is this—"Go ye therefore and teach all nations." A few years after receiving this command, we find Peter at Joppa sent for by Cornelius, a Roman centurion; hesitatingly he accompanies the messengers, and arriving at Cesarea, enters the house of Cornelius, whom he greets with these words, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or to come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." This had been shown to him by an obscure vision on the previous day, while in a trance at Joppa. Seven or eight years had probably elapsed since on the mountain in Galilee, Jesus had laid upon Peter the command to make disciples of all nations. The day of Pentecost was long past, and much had happened since then; but the parting injunction was not likely to have been forgotten; or how did it ever find a place where it is? Well, Peter has an opportunity of delivering his message to a Roman centurion, "of good repute" among all the nation of the Jews; but he remembers that it is unlawful for a Jew to come unto one of another nation, and his scruples are only overcome by a vision. Who made it unlawful for a Jew to act in the manner described? and who made it the duty of Peter to teach all nations? Cornelius was a man whom as a Jew it was unlawful for him to visit; and Jesus had enjoined him to make disciples of all nations, and he evidently did not regard the second commandment as releasing from the obligation of the first. The original unlawfulness was not obliterated by the new commandment; and why? The authority was not co-ordinate; Peter did not even then acknowledge that Jesus was equal to the Father as touching the Godhead.

We will now turn back to the earliest chapter in the history of Jesus, and it can only be touched upon with a feeling of pain. But it is impossible to pass it by; so much has been built upon it that we must look at the

foundation. Luke, who admits that his "knowledge" was derived from others, introduces the subject of the birth of Jesus in these words:—"The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary." The angel tells her she shall have a son, that "the Lord God shall give him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever." Then said Mary unto the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" Then follow some mysterious words. The inquiry put into Mary's mouth appears unwomanly. She was espoused to Joseph, and the angel's words would naturally be taken as a prophecy. How under such circumstances could Mary have proposed such a question? It reads like the interrogatory of a man framed to suit a theory. Matthew's words are, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily." Upon these words we ask whether what was known to Joseph was not also known to Mary's neighbours? Mary must have had neighbours who knew her circumstances; knew that she was betrothed, and knew what else was to be known. The neighbours of Mary in this town of Nazareth were very unlike other folks if they did not discover what was known to Joseph.

We read this story with prepossessions, we lisp it in our creed, we have heard it from our childhood; but we must strip it of all accessories and associations if we would look at it as it occurred. Joseph is minded to put Mary away; but "the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream," and he alters his purpose. We are obliged to ask, Is it a probable event that a dream should bring about such a result? What is the state of a man's mind

whose actions are guided by dreams, and who is satisfied to accept such evidence of such a fact? Can testimony like this be received? and how did Matthew become acquainted with it? Again, is it probable that Mary, betrothed to Joseph, would not have told him of the angel's visit and of his communication? Would she leave the announcement that had been made to her without informing her betrothed, and preparing him for so great an event? Was she to run the risk of being "put away" when she could make all clear as the sun? Would her neighbours have disbelieved her, and her betrothed have disowned her if she had made it plain to them that an angel had visited her and told her what has been told to us? The greatest event in the world's history was coming to pass—should it be left equivocal and suspicious, when it might be unimpeachable? Was the message of the angel kept secret, and a painful suspense created, in order that another angel in a dream might dispel it? Had she no friend or sister or parents to whom she could confide so wonderful a revelation? or was it only when her condition was discovered that she secured the protection of a husband by the intervention of an angel? The story is truly burdened with heavy improbabilities; not chargeable so much upon the fact as upon the circumstances with which it is surrounded. We are not arguing against the event; we are trying to make out how the actions and conduct of the several persons are consistent with one another, and with the circumstances related. And now let us follow the history. It is said, "his parents" went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover; and when he was twelve years old they went up, and as they returned they missed him and went back to seek him; and his mother reproachfully said, "Why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Here it is "his parents" who are introduced, and "Thy father and I have sought thee." Jesus lived with them as their child; and their neighbours—were they in ignorance

or did they know the truth? could they be kept in ignorance, and was it likely that they would be, even though they could? Were Joseph and Mary—the former a “just man,” the latter such a woman—likely to keep back and to hide what was so needful for the world to know? Had Mary lived these twelve years with Joseph and never referred to the predictions of the angel? Had she not friends and acquaintances to whom she talked of the real parentage of her son? Where is the woman to whom such an event could happen who would not speak of it? If “all generations were to call her blessed,” why not the generation with whom she lived? Yet we read she was “amazed” when she found him in the temple. What should have amazed her? If he had been an ordinary child, her amazement would have been natural, but not so if he was “conceived by the Holy Ghost.”

We must not look at the deified Mary as depicted by painters and poets; we must look at that poor town of Nazareth, and at a family resembling its neighbours; and we must judge of the feelings of men and women by what we know of other men and women. The people of Nazareth saw no difference between their own circumstances and those of Joseph and Mary. “Is not this the carpenter’s son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, and his sisters, are they not all with us?” Clearly, then, in their own neighbourhood, among their own people the mystic story of Mary’s child was not known; he was the carpenter’s son; there was nothing dubious about his birth, and there was no halo hanging around it. The angel had told her, he was to have the throne of his father David and to reign for ever. There was no Jew to whom such a promise was not a feasible one, and who had not a hope and expectation of such a person and such a time; it was a real material kingdom that was anticipated, and it was not in the nature of a Jewish mother to conceal such a destiny when it had been

promised and ensured to her by proofs that she must have felt to be incontrovertible and infallible. If doubt would ever cloud the mind of others, it would never invade that of Mary ; she had an evidence and a testimony that nothing could shake or disturb ; and if she could foresee that all generations would call her blessed, why not her own generation ? and why should the secret be hidden from them ? For it was not his neighbours only who knew him as Joseph's son. In the first chapter of John, Philip, it is said, " findeth Nathaniel and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." The appeal is to Moses, and the prophets ; and why designate him son of Joseph if he were not so ? how had the true fact become perverted and obscured ? If there was one part of his history more than another which it concerned his disciples and the world to know, it was this—that Joseph was not his father. If there was one proof of a divine mission more clear than another, it was to be found in the circumstance known to Mary—one which could not be admitted upon the uncorroborated word of any person, in a world where deception is so common, and the human mind so liable to be imposed upon. " The simple believeth every word ;" the genealogies of their great men were by the Jews preserved with care ; people understood how needful it was that proof should be forthcoming ; and shall the pedigree of Jesus be left in doubt ? Would Mary be content that a lineage so derogatory should be attributed to him ? could Joseph countenance so injurious and untruthful an impression ? For unquestionably to his first disciples he was Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph ; and there is no evidence that this information was ever doubted. The term " son of man " by which he is so commonly designated, was the one term of all others which was inapplicable to him, and could not but raise a conclusion at variance with the history found in the early part of Matthew. We appeal

to any canons of evidence by which such questions are decided. Mary herself calls Joseph his father; her neighbours, who knew her history and her betrothal, and must have been acquainted with her marriage and her circumstances, without qualification and without exception recognize Joseph and Mary as his parents; he grows up to manhood in his native place as their son; he commences his mission at thirty years of age, and is introduced to his first followers, as Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Is a chain of testimony like this to be set aside by unauthenticated and uncertified words, written no one knows when nor by whom? But one thing at least is clear,—the writer, whoever he was, reported only a tradition which will not bear confronting with the facts; the writer could not *know* what he avers, and the improbabilities which surround his statement on every side destroy its credibility; the central fact has none of the characteristics of truth about it. If it related to an ordinary event, and were so beset with inconsistencies, we should reject it. Can we believe what is so mysterious upon evidence that would not sustain the most inconsiderable statement? That a Jewish woman should become the mother of the Messiah was the greatest honour they could desire; all generations of Jews should call her blessed. It is said that Mary had incontestible proof that she was the favoured person—proof that she could not and would not wish to disguise; and yet she makes no announcement of what has been predicted and performed, and does not discover the parentage and destiny of her son. He goes to Jerusalem with “his parents” year by year; he grows up and the secret is not told, and he begins his public career as Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. We say again that neither Mary nor Joseph would have hidden this candle under a bushel.

“Believe me for the very works’ sake,”—“believe the works”—“if I had not done among them the works which none other man did they had not had sin.” In

these several expressions Jesus recognizes the force of facts to produce conviction, and the fact which Mary could have disclosed and could have supported by proof, more than any other fact, would have testified to his Divine mission. Much more would it have confirmed and enlightened his disciples; for that they could not have known or believed it is plain; they believed that his existence had terminated on the cross, and they regarded it as an "idle tale" that he should revive. How could they have done this if they had known what Matthew relates? The travellers to Emmaus were overwhelmed with sorrow at his fate; for they trusted it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; but they trusted no longer. And yet they must have known Matthew's story, if it were current; and if it were not, how and when did it arise?

This brings us to the question respecting the history of the works known as the Gospels, and the authorship of them. We are apt to have a wrong impression of them, because from our childhood we find them bound together as one book with the name of the author prefixed to each. But it is necessary for us to transport ourselves back to the times of the apostles, and if we ask when and under what circumstances each book was written, we shall discover that there is no real evidence of authorship. It is not known that one of the persons whose names are attached to the works could write at all; and as the oldest manuscript we possess was transcribed centuries after the Apostles' time, it is pretty certain to have been a copy of a copy of a copy—quite certain to have been a document made from some other document which had no signature or mark to show it had been authorized and verified by any competent judge or scribe. What does Paul say? "Ye see how large a letter I have written with my own hand" (Gal. vi. 11); "The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand" (1 Cor. xvi. 21); "I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle salute you" (Rom. xvi. 22); "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the

token in every epistle, so I write" (2 Thess. iii. 17). What we say, then, respecting the Gospels is, that this token is wanting. How should the Galatians know that it was Paul who wrote? The salutation was in his own hand:—"See in what large letters I write unto you with mine own hand"—are his words to the Galatians, more exactly translated. Paul's educated mind felt the need of some authentication. Besides this, a letter or work of art has character and individuality, which point to authorship; there is style that may be compared; there are thoughts which are characteristic; letters, too, are addressed to some public body or to those who could read, and works of art are collected by those who appreciate and preserve them and who have ancestors and posterity. But the disjointed memoirs and discourses of one who has lived mostly in obscure places, and among illiterate people, may lack the "tokens" which Paul felt to be necessary; and then we have to consider how it is probable they came into existence. The very title of the books leads us to their origin. "According to Matthew" may mean many things; it would be quite consistent with this title that not a word of it was actually written by Matthew. Placing ourselves in Judea in the time of Jesus we find that very few persons write, and not many read; books are scarce, and so are writing materials. In our own country in the 18th or even the 19th century we know what a large proportion of the people neither read nor write—cannot even sign their names when they marry; our fishermen have little occasion for pens, and the fishermen of Judea, as we know, were "unlearned and ignorant men." We do not expect them, therefore, to write; a man who has not been taught can no more write than he can make a pair of shoes; speak he may, and that eloquently,—but the mechanical art of writing and composing must be acquired by long practice, unless it has been taught in childhood. We know how rare the accomplishment has been in our own country in past

times, when even monarchs and great men had much trouble to write intelligibly even their own name. Well then, we may conclude that there were few writers among the early disciples, and that until after the crucifixion no part of the history of Jesus was written down; and then when persecution overtook them, and they were scattered, their preaching, their organizing, their fleeing from one city to another, would forbid their writing. But it is highly probable that some to whom the duty of preaching did not belong—men of the type of Nicodemus, or Joseph of Arimathea, or many others who have left no name in the world, would write down what they heard respecting “all that Jesus began both to do and to teach.” Such papers would accumulate, and would be marked by the names of the persons from whom the writer derived his information. He would endorse one roll according to Matthew, and another according to Luke, and another according to Mark or John; and such precious relics as these would come into possession of the church to which the owner belonged, and be laid up among its most cherished treasures; and the simple people who on Sunday listened to the minister as he read to them from the roll according to Matthew would or might know nothing of its origin. This same process might be repeated all over the land, wherever preachers came and made disciples, and wherever any person was able to write and desired to have a record of what he heard. There might in this way be innumerable manuscripts in existence which remained in private hands; and as in Antioch or some leading city the most eminent preachers might remain a long time, it is highly probable that the amplest materials would be gathered there. If the roll according to Matthew were found in such a city, it would become the standard, and if some other were found differing from it, various marks of annotation would be made, and other particulars and corrections would be collected, and transcribers might incorporate marginal

notes as part of the text. Again, some transcriber more learned than the rest might add an introduction or a genealogy which had fallen in his way ; and Matthew's Gospel has all the marks of such manipulation upon it. The first chapter might easily have been prefixed to a manuscript beginning as the 2nd chapter does—"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem," &c. Bethlehem had not been mentioned before, and the story of the miraculous conception is wholly contained in the first chapter, which might quite naturally be added by the scribe who heard of it and placed in the roll.

In this way for fifty years after the death of Jesus records would be growing until it became necessary to adapt them to the circumstances and wants of the Church. Luke asserts that "many had taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us." To set them forth in order—consecutively, chronologically,—this is just what we have conjectured. Luke was not an eye-witness, but the things were delivered to him by eye-witnesses. He does not say that those who had been eye-witnesses had set forth any declarations, viz., had written any. The implication is they had not, and so he undertakes to write for Theophilus, that he might know the certainty of the things wherein he had been instructed. It is quite consistent with this opening that the narrative was written from previous memoirs ; indeed, it seems probable that it may have been the work of another hand. For what could have been the age of Theophilus, to whom it is addressed ? He must have been a man, he had been instructed in the doctrines of Christianity, which implies that he must have been born after the apostles began to preach the Gospel ; the certainty of those things wherein he had been instructed must mean all the things relating to Jesus ; and this could not be until those things had been formulated and consolidated. How would a child be instructed in what his parents were not informed of ?

Therefore, we must assume that Theophilus was over twenty years old at the time; and we must give at least ten years after the death of Jesus for the Church to have been in a condition to do what it is said had been done for Theophilus. Moreover, as many had already taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of things which were believed, it seems clear that the words imply a series of events which must have occupied many years. However these memoirs were collected together, we may be certain from what Luke says that he had seen many others, and that he proposed to himself the production of a more orderly narrative. The narrative he wrote would, therefore, be a compilation. What he aimed at doing was to gather into a focus the scattered rays of light which had been brought to his knowledge; "to set forth in order" the materials he had collected. Now, whatever he might have written no one now can say that the Gospel we possess in our Bibles is a verbatim copy—neither more nor less,—of what he wrote. This "token" is wanting. There has been no "authorized version" of what any evangelist wrote, with which our oldest manuscript is known to have been compared. All that we find asserted is—"according to Luke," &c.

In modern times, if a play is attributed to Shakespeare, critics compare it with his known productions, and they reject it or receive it according to their skill and tact and knowledge. And how can we expect the "not many noble," the "not many mighty," of the early Church to pass judgment on productions which were said to be "according to Luke"? Bad faith is charged upon no one; we may believe that each transcriber did his best. But we know that words have been interpolated—nay verses and even paragraphs. The twelve closing verses of Mark are missing in some copies; the verses respecting the three witnesses are allowed to be spurious; and there may be many other like faults which could be discovered if we had—not something "according to

Luke"—but, something with the sign manual of Luke or with the "token" Paul speaks of—a narrative compared page by page with an authentic manuscript, a narrative which we could know with a moral certainty had passed under the eye of Peter or of John, concerning things they had looked upon, and which their hands had handled (1 John i. 1). Therefore, when we find a state of mind in the disciples inconsistent with the state of facts recorded in the history, we are compelled to reject the latter evidence, and to receive the former. We are compelled to remember that the narrative was put together many years after the events and by unknown hands; that it had been transcribed again and again, has been probably the result of many additions and revisions, until the original text cannot be ascertained. Nay, it cannot be proved that an original, authorized text ever existed from which other verbatim copies were made; and in the absence of this we can only look at the circumstances of the times, at the lowly and scattered condition of the early disciples. "The common people heard him gladly;" and of such people the disciples came. How could they judge of the genuineness of documents which they could not read? We do not certainly know that the men who wrote our Gospels were in any case the men who saw and heard. The liability to error is therefore incalculable; and when the work of different scribes was collected, the roll according to Matthew might be altered or amended by reference to the judgment of some respected authority; and at last the least perfect copy might be preserved. Paul recognizes and John recognizes the value of original evidence; the writing of one who saw and heard, and was competent to report. Much lower down comes that which proceeds from him who writes only from the report of others, and lower still is the unknown copy of the inferior copyist. We know that errors exist in our most trusted copies, for they vary; but we do not know how much they vary

from the original unmutilated and unchanged copy which had suffered neither addition nor subtraction; and we know not if such copy ever existed. The work of one hand and one mind has a coherence and a signification which is denied to miscellaneous memoirs, derived from different sources, and which in all good faith and pious feeling may have been the repositories of traditions that an adequate knowledge would have rejected. And then follows a scribe whose state of mind is in harmony with the traditions; and he incorporates them with his text, which may happen to survive and become the standard of that which is ultimately adopted. We repeat, there is the widest difference possible between a work of art and a collection of memoirs which had been floating about before they were committed to writing. The mere craft of the penman is needed in one case, but genius and idiosyncrasy are necessary in the other. The number of the disciples was great, and the next generation, who only knew Jesus by report, would eagerly seek after some permanent narrative of his life and teaching; and whoever could gratify this wish—whoever among them could write—would adopt the course described in Jeremiah: “Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book.” “And they asked Baruch, How didst thou write all these words at his mouth? Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth and I wrote them with ink in the book.” “Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim King of Judah had burned in the fire; and there were added besides unto them many like words” (xxxvi. 4, 17, 18, 32). Here is the process in full operation, which we assume to have been followed a few generations later. Nothing was materially changed in the habits of the people; the scribes are conspicuous enough in the time of Jesus; and where writing

was a craft, it would hardly be acquired as an accomplishment. Says Hamlet, "I once did hold it, as our statisticians do, a baseness to write fair, and laboured much how to forget that learning." The Christian religion was propagated by oral communication; the Gospel was preached; and as Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah, we may be quite sure that scribes wrote also from the mouth of those who had been "eye-witnesses and ministers."

Let the last word be noted, and we can have no doubt that the manuscripts written from the mouth of such persons would be inscribed with the name of the person from whom directly or indirectly it came. Hence it would be "according to Matthew," whoever might have been the communicant; and we know there were "many who had taken" this business in hand. The work of very few indeed has remained to us, a considerable number having been rejected; but the words of Luke imply that "many genuine declarations" were existent when he wrote. Where are they? and how do we know that what remain to us are the pure unadulterated words written or authorized by the names they bear? This is not an unreasonable question; for we know that even the earliest writing was the work of scribes who wrote long after the events they described; and we find there is a discord between the facts recorded and the mental state of the men who were living and acting. In the plainest possible words Jesus foretells a short time before his death every circumstance that should befall him, and as they happened; and he adds and repeats it that on the third day he would rise again; he communicates this to the twelve privately, and he speaks of it openly; and the chief priests are reported to have taken precautions on account of it; and yet the apostles and near friends of Jesus regard his resurrection as an "idle tale." Words are found in the Gospel of John which, if spoken as they are written, make it impossible to believe that the apostles could have regarded Jesus as a mere man, whom the chief priests

could destroy; and yet when he was crucified they buried him, "bringing spices" to embalm him; and the cry of the first visitors is, "They have taken away the Lord." "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the sepulchre." Not the faintest hope or thought existed in the mind of any one that Jesus had risen from the dead. How is this to be reconciled with what he had himself told them, with the fact that other persons whom they saw and knew had risen from the dead? How is it consistent with words that are found in John's Gospel, which no one could have heard from a man of truth and soberness, and yet have believed that the speaker could be finally worsted by the chief priests? That Jesus was equal to the Father as touching the Godhead is now thought to be proved by his words and works; and yet it appears that those men saw and heard—not only what is left to us—but "also the many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John xxi. 25). These "many other things" they also saw; and yet when Jesus was crucified, a disciple besought Pilate that he might take away the body; he came, therefore, and took it; and Nicodemus also "came and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes about an hundred pounds weight; and they took the body and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury their dead;" and he was buried just as other men were, if perchance with more love and reverence. That he should rise again was not thought of, and when they were told of it by those who had seen him they disbelieved it as an idle tale. How could they have heard all the words that are said to have been spoken to them? That they should not understand certain obscure prophecies is probable enough; but that they should fail to understand plain words is not only incomprehensible, but would go far to discredit their general testimony and competence as witnesses. If they had heard certain words which we are

told they did hear, how could they believe that Jesus would die as the two malefactors would die? How could Peter after so many years say to Cornelius that it was unlawful for him, a Jew, to come unto one of another nation, when the last injunction Jesus had laid upon him was, "Go and make disciples of all nations"?

The two disciples journeying to Emmaus were not believers in the resurrection; but it is said Jesus "expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." How gladly should we have read this exposition, and how remarkable it is that, if the plain words and facts they were acquainted with had made no impression on their minds, any ambiguous prophecies should have done so! Then the story of the chief priests plot, that was to disappoint the prophesied resurrection, is full of improbabilities when it is tested by the recorded conduct of the several parties. Nobody is shown to have acted as though it were true; the chief priests could hardly have blundered so egregiously; the watch could not have acted so inconsistently, nor the apostles have failed to appeal to such a confirmation of their words; but then we may not overlook the writer's remark, "This saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day;" meaning undoubtedly some distant day when he was writing. And things "commonly reported" among hostile parties are not necessarily true, but emphatically need proof, of which none is here given; for it is not said the writer had any knowledge of the fact otherwise than from common report or rumour.

The statements of Matthew and Luke respecting Joseph and Mary need not be further referred to; only we may say they are void of all proof. Neither Matthew nor Luke were competent to give any evidence on the subject; they might not have been born at the time of Jesus' birth, and at any rate all they knew about it could only have come to their knowledge many years after, and is much more likely to have been added by some copyist

who had received it or reasoned it out. Matthew, the publican, if born, was a child when it happened, employed for years as a tax gatherer; what is his evidence against that of contemporaries on the spot? What event in the life of Jesus confirms the story? What act done by any body implies they were acquainted with it? We have no argument against the circumstance itself; we only say the facts recorded are inconsistent with the theory. And as a universal rule of human conduct it may be asserted that when the actions of all persons who have the best means of knowing an event are consistent with certain statements, the actions confirm the statements; but when the actions which are recorded directly contradict the statements or are not in correspondence with them, the statements are thereby discredited, and for all practical purposes disproved. We know from the history how the people of Nazareth acted and what they thought. We have the words and actions of Joseph and Mary. What is "commonly reported among the Jews" is adduced by Matthew as some proof of an event; but what is "commonly reported" in a small country town of the circumstances and relations of persons whose lives have been spent there, is evidence which common sense—elevated and purified into law and reason—everywhere accepts. And a mere statement made in a book many years after and confirmed by no authority would not for one moment be received against it.

We are not arguing against a great and well attested mystery; nor asking with Mary, "How shall this be?" though, as she was not rebuked for it, why should we? Our inquiry is, How does it come to pass that no one in the history acts as though there were any mystery existing? We are told, "Neither did his brethren believe in him" (John vii. 5). Again we say—believe what? for it is proved that to the last day of the life of Jesus, his disciples all believed him to be mortal. What was it, then, that his brethren did not believe?

That he was the Messiah. If they had known what we now find written, their belief must indeed have been great and wonderful; but it was nothing of the kind. If Mary and Joseph had disclosed that history which indeed could not have been concealed, the conduct of his brethren and of every one else is inexplicable; and if they did not tell the supernatural history of Jesus—and we know that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh—how did Luke and Matthew, many years after, become acquainted with the circumstances? Even Bishop Pearson admits that this article of the Creed has varied since it was reduced to writing. What it was precisely before that time, who can tell?

Another point deserves notice. Matthew says, “All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which being interpreted is God with us.” Mary evidently knew nothing of this prophecy, nor did the angel unfold it, but said the child should be called Jesus, and there is no evidence that in his lifetime he was ever called Emmanuel; and every act of every person that can be tested proves, that neither in name nor fact whilst he lived was Jesus ever regarded as “God with us.” The word Emmanuel occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and the words in Isaiah are strangely torn away from the context, and, taken as they stand, could not be applied with Matthew’s interpretation. That such a paragraph should be inserted by some copyist as elucidating the text is very probable, and that it should suit the feeling of many minds is also obvious. In the first chapter of John’s Gospel one of the disciples on his introduction to Jesus is represented as saying to one of his friends, “We have found the Messias.” How easily was so great a fact assented to, and upon what evidence? A little further on some one else says, “We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did

write." Very credulous and soon satisfied these men must have been—"the simple believeth every word." What had then been done which justified these assertions, and how is it that the same men, so apt to believe, did not understand the unambiguous words of Jesus which foretold his resurrection? and how, hearing such words and other marvellous words in John's Gospel, did they ever come to regard the resurrection as an idle tale? And when they aver that they have found Messias—him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write—what was it they believed respecting him? Whom say ye that I am? "We trusted it had been he which should have redeemed Israel" is the answer which, after all their knowledge and experience of his life and work, is given by the travellers to Emmaus.

In our own days we have seen how an article may get added to the Creed, and how grave men may bring themselves to believe that they can infallibly determine what they call the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary herself; and so great a man as Dr. Newman can accept their prodigious dogma, as having been at some time or other borne upon the aromatic breeze—much rather was it born in the foul stithy of monkish minds. But if in the broad daylight of modern times such an addition could be made to the Creed, if floating speculations of ancient times could be so concreted and consolidated, how easy was it in a superstitious and illiterate age to introduce words into a Creed! The organization of the early Church, when 3,000 were added in one day, must have been loose, and belief must have been of the vaguest kind; and public formulas must have been very slowly put into writing. It is not possible to say what precisely was the creed of the apostles, for it varied; and though we call a certain formula the Apostles' Creed, there is no evidence that any apostle ever saw it, though it might be gathered from traditions or writings. As a matter of course, the Creed could only be derived

from these sources, and if the writings are uncertain, the Creed cannot possess higher authority than the writings.

We know the ready answer to all this—scepticism, rationalism, or some such abusive epithet. We know how easy it is to give this answer, and how easy to retort that indolence, dulness, love of reputation, hope of gain, and advancement in the world, keep men passive and uninquisitive. There are endowments for them every where—rectories, deaneries, canonries, bishoprics, and other such like things; and it is just as fair to attribute belief to these endowments, as it is to attribute unbelief to immoral inducements of any other kind. The day is gone for these recriminations; though it must be admitted that all worldly advantages are now on the side of belief. What does it profit a man that he should lose a dry, inert acquiescence in formulas that few trouble themselves to understand? Why should he rise up early and late take rest, in order to obtain an intellectual hold upon what he has been mechanically taught? Why should he do this painfully and laboriously when it is certain that he will be reviled and persecuted according to the method of modern days, if he moves from the anchorage where the staid and respectable members of society find a refuge and a haven? But this peril is one that has had to be encountered at all times—for the water must needs be troubled before any healing could be accomplished; and as one observes the lethargic acquiescence that prevails in one quarter and the drowsy dogmatism in another, it may not be inopportune, nay, it may even be useful, to ask of these somnolent authorities—“What meanest thou, O sleeper?” (Jonah i. 6.)

The present writer does not go beyond this modest enquiry. He has meditated according to his opportunity and ability upon what he has been taught; and the things in which he has been instructed refuse to adjust themselves as they were wont to do. Therefore he submits the matter to his “spiritual pastors and masters,” whose

name is legion, and he beseeches them not to rail, which is cheap and facile; but to inform, which is more arduous, as it is also more profitable alike to him who gives and him who takes. Perfunctory advice and explanations have no light in them, and are no longer serviceable; there may be solvents of the difficulties herein stated, which the present writer is not cognizant of; and he asks only to be made acquainted with them. He would fain believe what is true, if it be discoverable; and if not, it seems better to wait and "feel after" it, than to dogmatize and to denounce. In matters of faith it is reckoned an error in some quarters to seek for that which is "reasonable;" and yet this word has the commendation of Paul. Moreover, Pearson and Butler and Paley and many others have done their best in the way of argument to convict opponents and remove obstacles; and it seems unfair, when their particular reasoning is proved to be defective, that the very faculty of reason should be condemned and traduced. Those who get worsted in argument are usually the persons who speak opprobriously of the process. But assuredly if reason be potential and legitimate to build up and to construct an orthodoxy, it is not less valid and effectual to pull down and to destroy a heterodoxy; and in the end "if it be of God" (Acts v. 39) it will prevail, to enlighten and to edify, and ye cannot overthrow it.

We have made our appeal to the recorded facts of history; we have produced the evidence of events as they occurred; we have gathered up the living testimony of persons as they spoke and acted; we have contrasted these things with remarks and commentaries made many years after in connection with the same events; and we say by all rules of evidence that the first series of circumstances is more cogent and convincing than the second, that the actions are of more authority than the words. If we were called upon by any Court to determine an issue respecting the birth and parentage of a man

which came to be disputed after his death ; and if it were proved that he lived from infancy in a small country village as the child of parents, natives of this village and well-known there ; if it appeared that his mother publicly recognized her husband as the child's father ; if the neighbours testified that they had known the child from his infancy as the offspring of these parents ; if he had, to their knowledge, lived with his family as one of their children until he grew to manhood ; if he had afterwards occupied a public position, and had become the acknowledged founder of an important religious body ; and if his first friends and followers had recognized him in some distinct manner as the son of these parents,—would any evidence derived from a document written many years after his death, be allowed to invalidate such testimony ? We know it would not ; neither father nor mother would be allowed to contradict such evidence ; much less would a stranger be permitted, after the parents' death, to say he had been told by some one that his parentage was not what these facts proved it to be. The business of the world could not be carried on if mere uncorroborated assertions were to prevail over unquestioned facts. No human being is exempt from the law of reason and common sense, which are God's instruments for governing mankind ; and no human being can be asked to believe as a fact what contradicts the rules and methods which experience has proved to be essential for the conduct and guidance of human affairs.

The "Indian Evidence Act" teaches us something on this subject, and embodies a rule of common sense in these words : "When one person has, by his declaration, act or omission, intentionally caused or permitted another person to believe a thing to be true and to act upon such belief, neither he nor his representative shall be allowed, in any suit or proceeding between himself and such person or his representative, to deny the truth of that thing." Applying this rule to the case proposed—the

parents, by declaration, act and omission, intentionally caused or permitted other persons to believe a thing to be true—(viz., that this child was their son)—and they would not therefore be allowed afterwards to deny the truth of that thing; much more could no other person deny it, especially after their death, and without a scintilla of evidence to support the assertion.

If Matthew knew what passed between Mary and the angel, and knew what was afterwards recorded on the subject “according to Matthew and according to Luke,” he must have been the most unbelieving of unbelievers, or the most unreflective and unobservant of men, if, having followed Jesus through his ministry, he regarded the resurrection as an “idle tale.” Of the two events which was the more improbable? or, given the first event, would anything less than the second be looked for?

When we meet with discrepancies in historical documents, we endeavour to account for and explain them, a thing no unprejudiced person can object to. Now, undoubtedly, the most remarkable fact at present before us, is that the apostles and followers of Jesus universally disbelieved in the resurrection. All the discourses “according to John,” and all the words and wonders at Bethany did not prevent any of them from regarding his resurrection as an idle tale. When the Pharisees were told of what had been done at Bethany they said—“If we let him thus alone all men will believe on him.” What they would believe we are not told; but the expectation that they would believe something extraordinary of him was very natural; and yet the Apostles who saw and heard what we now read, and much more (John xx. 30, and xxi. 25) had no thought or hope of any resurrection from the dead; their anticipations were plainly of an earthly kingdom, in which they were “to sit on his right hand and on his left;” and when he was crucified, this prospect vanished utterly, and with it all the glory and

greatness they had contemplated. In presence of such a fact we must conclude that the warnings so distinctly given in the history were not spoken as we find them. These warning words were written many years after the events. Jesus saw the danger in which the enmity of the rulers and the Pharisees placed him and spoke of it, but not in the detailed manner now presented to us. The copyist, writing long after the events, not unnaturally added the particulars which did happen, but which in reality were not foretold. The copyist himself feels the difficulty; for he says,—“they understood none of these things, neither knew they the things that were spoken” (Luke xviii. 34). On another occasion when they did not comprehend a parable, Peter said to Jesus “Declare unto us this parable” (Matt. xv. 15); and again they ask, “What might this parable be?” and they are themselves asked at another time, “Have ye understood all these things?” They say unto Him, “Yea Lord” (Matt. xiii. 51), and thereupon Jesus contrasts their condition with that of others,—who, “hearing, hear not, neither understand,”—because of their grossness, dulness, and blindness; their mental vision was gone—eyes, ears, and heart were closed; but of the disciples Jesus says, “Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear” (Matt. xiii. 15). That they should not be able to interpret a parable is fairly probable; but, with “eyes” and “ears,” that they should not understand what it was to be condemned to death, to be delivered to the Gentiles, to be mocked, scourged, spitted upon, crucified, and to rise again the third day; this is indeed incomprehensible; and of the two it is much more probable that the copyist added these particulars to the text, than that the disciples did not understand them.

The acts of the apostles, Peter, and John, and the acts of the Chief Priests are inconsistent with the story of the soldiers at the tomb, as commonly reported among the Jews, “according to Matthew,” many years after the

crucifixion. The report will not bear testing by the events of the time, and we may well ask how it comes to pass that a "great earthquake" left no mark of its action which might be appealed to? Once, indeed, at Thrasy-mene

"An earthquake reeled unheededly away ;"

but its destructive effects were distinctly visible, and a "great earthquake" near a town could hardly occur without leaving evidence that might be produced; and yet neither friends nor foes allude to it, although the opportunity was so signally afforded.

Jesus enjoins Peter to make disciples of all nations, and yet years after, he tells Cornelius that it is unlawful for him, a Jew, to come in unto one of another nation; and his scruples are only overcome by a strange vision which he sees in a trance, and to which he pays more respect than to the parting words of Jesus.

The confession of faith by the travellers to Emmaus, that Jesus was a prophet mighty in word and deed, and that they trusted it had been he that should have redeemed Israel, was not only their own belief, but that of all the apostles and disciples, as far as it can be ascertained; and when he had expired upon the Cross they abandoned this cherished hope, and consigned him to the tomb as his final resting place, bringing spices as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Nothing that Jesus had said or done, none of the wonderful sayings found in the writing "according to John," and none of the wonderful works described in it, had impressed them with the belief that he was more than mortal; for when the men in shining garments said to the women, "He is not here but risen; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and the third day rise again. *And they remembered his words, and told all those things unto the eleven and to all the rest.*" It was Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James,

and other women that were with them who told these things unto the apostles. And "*their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.*" (Luke xxiv. 6, 11.)

What, in particular, the apostles and disciples did believe respecting Jesus of Nazareth, as in their sorrow they consigned him to the tomb, it is not possible now to prove; but in obeying the apostolic injunction—"prove all things"—we arrive unequivocally at this negative result, that nothing which he had done or taught induced them to believe that he was "equal to the Father as touching the Godhead."

SOCRATES AND THE ATHENIANS.

THE present inhabitants of Greece, whether they be the descendants of that imperial race which once occupied the country, or whether they be the posterity of those barbarous tribes which subsequently despoiled and depopulated it, are said to feel that they lie under some sort of obloquy and opprobrium on account of the judicial condemnation and death of Socrates, for which the Greece of more than 2000 years ago made itself responsible; and it has been suggested that in some Court or other a motion should be made for a new trial, and that the cause should be re-heard.

The verdict of the civilized world has not confirmed and approved the verdict of Athens; at least, it has not done so with anything like unanimity. It is true there have been writers who have defended Athens; but it is most material, if we would pass a fair judgment upon the case, that we should regard it from the point of view of contemporaries. How did it come to pass that two such admittedly intelligent forces were brought into conflict? What was it that caused the collision? and how did it happen that it resulted so disastrously? It is easy to denounce the Athenians and to exonerate Socrates, and it is not difficult to extenuate Athens and to blame Socrates. Modern criticism has done both. Counsel has been heard on behalf of Socrates and on behalf of Athens; and another age, uninfluenced by the passions and prejudices which prevailed when the cause was first tried, have reconsidered the facts and the

pleadings, and have decided it, some in one way and some in another. There is no new evidence to be adduced on the subject; no new facts or documents have been brought to light. What Plato and Xenophon said at the time is the most authentic information which remains; but each generation is apt to look at the evidence from its own point of view. What is really wanted is that we should put ourselves as far as possible in the position of the actors in this drama, making all due allowance for the feelings, the temper, and the prejudices of those who were concerned in the transaction; and we must remember that what is called prejudice by a later generation was very often by a contemporary one denominated by the word "principle," or by some other equally eulogistic name. That which in one man or one era is a real and strong prejudice is only discovered to have been so when the man is dead and the era has passed away.

A few years ago it was hardly possible for an Englishman who was not a Greek scholar to make himself acquainted with the true history of Socrates as it presented itself to the Athenian people. The works of Plato were practically inaccessible to English readers, and a real history of Greece, depicting the institutions, character, surroundings, and mental condition of its people, was not within the reach of an ordinary English reader. All this has now been reversed. The Master of Balliol College, Oxford (Professor Jowett), has published a translation of Plato's works, with copious introductions, which enable an English reader to appreciate the Socratic dialogue, even if many of its beauties are lost in the process of translation; and though some of the dialogues may seem trifling and tedious, those relating to the trial and death of Socrates ought to be read by everyone. Then the "History of Greece," by George Grote, is a picture of the Greek people such as no Englishman ever produced before. It is the work of a man who brought

before his own mind and presented to his readers the many phases of Greek life and the various phenomena which marked and distinguished that remarkable people and made them what they were. Grote was an English politician, a member of Parliament, a man of profound culture and attainments, and a practical London banker, possessing warm and wide sympathies. To him the Greeks were living men, not dim and remote shadows; and the events of their history and the springs of action operating upon them were as familiar to him as the things of his daily life. He felt and appreciated their struggles and aspirations; and so his history has about it a vivacity and reality which stamp it in vivid colours upon the reader's mind. No picture of Socrates can be more distinct and clear than that which is drawn by Grote. It bears the impress of impartiality and truth, doing justice, as one must think, to the Athenian people, and not less so to Socrates. I can only gather from these and other sources the facts which relate to the history of Socrates, and place them before you in such a way as seems to me to give a fair, though it must necessarily be a very meagre, outline.

Political and judicial institutions in all ages have been imperfect and fallible. Men in all ages, however excellent and well intentioned, have been the creatures of their own era; and if here and there one man has happened to rise above his own age, his fellow-men have usually regarded him with suspicion and antagonism. The man and the institutions have come into conflict, and the weaker—the individual—has usually gone to the wall. We may pass over so much of the personal history of Socrates as does not concern his philosophical character. There is no dispute about the events of his life, and there is not much to distinguish them from that of an ordinary Athenian. He served his country as a soldier, and performed those ordinary public duties which were expected of a man in his position, though he did not seek public

employment. It is his philosophy and the peculiar methods by which he illustrated and enforced it that have distinguished him from the rest of his countrymen; it was the mental and moral habits of the man which marked him out from the crowd; it was his originality and force of character which made him so illustrious; and what we have to consider is, how these special characteristics of his manifested themselves, how they influenced and affected the Athenian people, and how the conflict between them originated, and at last culminated in so fatal a manner. In order to understand this, we must try to make out what sort of man Socrates was, what sort of people and institutions it was amongst which he lived, and how it was they came to be placed in such antagonism to each other.

The greatness of Athens may be dated from about 500 years before our era. The battle of Marathon was fought 490 years B.C.; and the battle of Marathon may be reckoned as the opening act of that great drama which unfolded the power and glory of Athens. The victory thus achieved over the vast forces of Persia was one of those events which form the landmarks of history, and it roused a patriotic pride in the minds of the Greek people which sustained them through long and desperate conflicts, and which, in fact, never wholly died out. Contemporaneously with this military greatness there was developed an intellectual and political greatness such as the world has never seen before or since. Athens rolled back the tide of Persian invasion, and her military success was followed by intellectual triumphs not less marvellous. There may have been in the history of the world poets, orators, philosophers, statesmen, and artists individually equal to the most eminent of the Greeks; but there has nowhere been a group of men, belonging to the same time and place, who could compare with them. The population of Athens was that of only a moderate provincial town in England, but it produced during the

era of which we are speaking, not here and there a star of the first magnitude, but a whole constellation—architectural, philosophical, poetical—which continues to this day the most brilliant and distinguished in the intellectual firmament.

While kings in dusty darkness hid
Have left a nameless pyramid,
Thy heroes, though the general doom
Hath swept the column from their tomb,
A mightier monument command—
The mountains of their native land!
There points thy Muse to strangers' eye
The graves of those who cannot die!

Much of the work done at this period in Greece has been lost. Statues and temples and columns have disappeared, but enough remain to prove the pre-eminent power that existed. Dramas innumerable have left only a name, but some few, tragic and comic, have escaped the ravages of time, and are universally held to be of unmatched beauty and excellence. Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, would each have made any literature famous; and they all appeared, with competitors, who surpassed them, on the stage of Athens at the same period. The historians of later times acknowledge that Greek models are unapproachable, and the world's orators unanimously give precedence to those of Greece.

We may form some notion of a people whom we have not seen when we come to know their habits, pursuits, and amusements. If a people find pleasure in killing and tormenting animals, in bull-baiting, or cock-fighting, or sports of this kind, we may safely conclude that they are gross and barbarous. On the other hand, a people may prove by their amusements that they are frivolous and foolish. The Athenians do not come under any category of this kind.

The Greeks may be said to have created the theatre, and to have forthwith put upon the stage the most con-

summate series of dramas which have ever illustrated the dramatic art. The theatre at Athens was a national institution. It was provided for the whole male population. Thirty thousand persons, it is said, could be accommodated in it, and tickets were freely issued to those who were not able to buy them. Such a theatre was, of course, very little like ours. The performance took place in the daytime, under the open sky; there could be no roof to so vast a building; it was circular in form, the seats raised one above another so that all could hear and see. The Romans built places of amusement, on the same model in form and style, and they devoted them to conflicts between wild beasts and to gladiatorial shows. The contrast between the Greeks and the Romans in this respect is as that between light and darkness, between barbarism and civilization. The amusement of the Greeks was of an intellectual order; that of the Romans was brutal and savage. Theatrical performance with the Greeks was associated with their religious feasts, and was originally devoted to the service of one of their gods.

When we are estimating the Athenian people it is essential that we should remember the points in which they differed from their neighbours, the nations which surrounded them, and the nations which followed in their wake—Egyptians, Babylonians, Carthaginians, Romans. The poetry and philosophy of Athens could only have flourished among a highly-cultivated and intellectual people, and what they knew and what they did was of their own growth. They had no predecessors, and they have had no successors. The men who lived hundreds of years after them might criticize and condemn them, but in many things they have never yet reached their level. We judge of a man by his actions and conduct, by the book he reads, by his style of thought, and by the coarseness or refinement of his language. We judge of a nation by its literature, its laws, its intelligence, and its humanity. The Greek language is allowed by all to be an instrument of

incomparable power and precision. Greek thought has been the most influential, far-reaching, and vivifying which the world has known; and we may safely infer that the people who created and used such an apparatus, and for such high purposes, stood in the very first rank. What they were politically is a question which may be postponed; but here again they worked out problems of government more worthily than their contemporaries or predecessors. If their methods were imperfect and their success incomplete, they at least were pioneers of self-government, if they did not themselves permanently attain it. There was a very strenuous political life at Athens; and politics, even in this 19th century of grace, and in this intelligent and Christian England of ours, is not always a school of moderation and good manners, of good temper and generous feeling and polite language. It is not the fashion even now among political partisans to put the best construction upon their opponents' acts, or to regard their faults with forbearance and kindness; and therefore, if it is alleged against the Athenians that the oligarchical Socrates when brought to trial was obnoxious to a turbulent democracy, we must not deny to the Athenians as jurymen the instinct of fair play, unless we are prepared at the same time to acknowledge that our own politics have eaten out entirely the very heart and vitals of our judicial faculty and feeling. Let it be admitted that the Athenians, though they were hard hitters, could and did when they entered the jury box leave behind them political malevolence.

There is another most important factor in the history of the Athenians which we must consider, if we would do justice between Socrates and his judges. The accusation against Socrates was that he was not loyal to the religion of his country: the specific charge will come out by-and-by. We must not suppose that, because the religion of the Athenians seems to us extravagant and absurd, it therefore had no hold upon the feelings and

thoughts of the Athenians themselves. It is very easy for people who look at a religion which has passed away, and which possessed innumerable gods, to speak of it slightly and contemptuously; but this is not doing justice to it. What we have to ask is, How did those people regard their religion? Did it affect their minds? Did it move their feelings? Did it create fear and hope, and joy and terror? If it did, then it was a potent agent and a powerful influence which overshadowed their life. It might be full of folly and falsehood, but it might be not the less real in its operation. When we are thinking of a religion which existed thousands of years ago we are not to judge of it by what it *seems* now, but by what it *was* then—by its effects. Did it sometimes create alarm and sometimes kindle hope? for if it did, however unreasonable it may now seem, it was once a living agency that influenced men. That this was the character of the Greek religion is clear. It had religious services of all sorts, and it was woven up with all the events of Greek life. The age of which we are speaking was not an age of books, but of teaching by the living voice, by poetry and mythical romances which were recited by impassioned speakers, whose narratives were received with unquestioning faith, and became the staple of the national religion. The stories of Homer were the quarry from which the religion of Greece was shaped and fashioned. Homer, it has been said, was the Bible of the Greeks. Professor Mahaffy, in his "Social Life in Greece," says: "To the old-fashioned Athenian, his mythology was the source of his morals and of his highest culture. He had framed for himself ideals of bravery, of honour, and of greatness from his Homer; he had seen the tragic poets draw their most splendid inspiration from these legends; he had seen the Epos inspire the painter, the sculptor, and the architect—in fact, the whole glory of Athens, literary, social, and artistic, was bound up with the Homeric theology. Supposing him, therefore, to be persuaded by the philosophers,

and to abandon in secret the faith of his forefathers, we can well imagine him arguing, with even more apparent force than the modern sceptic, that, however false or fictitious were these ancient legends, however unproved or doubtful this ancient creed, yet at all events under it, and through it, Athens had grown in splendour, and become perfect in culture—that, therefore, no citizen versed in the annals of Athens, and appreciating her true greatness, could venture to speak disrespectfully of her creed, even were it proved to be obsolete.”

The gentlemen assembled at Xenophon's Symposium express themselves satisfied with their faith, and Xenophon tells them that the gods inform him, by signs, voices, dreams, and omens, what he should do and forbear, and that when he obeys them he never has reason to repent. Socrates replies, “None of these things are the least incredible; but this I should like to hear, how you serve them so as to make them such friends of yours.” “So you shall,” is the reply, “and I do it at a very moderate expense, for I praise them without any cost to myself, and of what they grant me I always return them a share. I speak of them respectfully as far as I can, and when I call them to witness, I never intentionally tell a lie.” “Well, by Jove!” says Socrates, “if by so doing you have the gods your friends, the gods too, it seems, are pleased with gentlemanly conduct.”

We may think ourselves much better than Xenophon; but what we have to consider is that, with all its apparent absurdity in the eyes of this 19th century, it was two or three thousand years ago an institution which challenged the homage and directed the movements and feelings of intelligent men. We must never forget that what is folly and nonsense to one age may be a most potent and governing influence in another. If the mythology of Greece were not an agency of this kind, then the case against Socrates was stronger than at first it may appear.

He was accused of a sort of impiety, of disregarding

and disbelieving in his country's gods. He, in fact, denied this allegation, and contended that in truth he was a sincere worshipper. He claimed to associate himself with his countrymen in his regard and reverence for their common divinities. Was this true or not? Socrates, by his defence, admitted that the people of Athens had certain recognized gods whom they worshipped, and he asserted that he was a fellow-worshipper with them. We must not, therefore, assume, because they were polytheists, that they had no real religion, or that the religion they professed had no hold upon their feelings. What we have to remember is, that religion with the Athenians was, perhaps, not associated with a lofty and pure morality out of which it grew and which sustained it, but that mainly it manifested itself in ceremonies, feasts, sacrifices, invocations, and a variety of acts intended to propitiate, to appease, or to please their divinities. These acts were visible, palpable things; and so long as a man performed them according to custom he was safe. I lay some stress on this, for reasons which will hereafter appear; and there is one other piece of evidence which I wish to produce before quitting this part of the subject. St. Paul visited Athens three or four hundred years after the death of Socrates. Religion in the meantime had not taken deeper root in Athens; indeed, it had lost much of its hold upon the more educated people; but St. Paul said, addressing a body of Athenians, "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious, for as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I saw an altar," &c. Now this word "superstition" means generally, an expectation of supernatural results, by means incompetent or absurd. Shakespeare uses the word in this sense. Addressing Pericles, one of the sailors says: "Sir, your queen must overboard; the sea works high, the wind is loud, and will not lie till the ship be cleared of the dead." To which Pericles replies: "That's your superstition;" and the sailor responds: "Pardon us, sir; with us on sea it hath been still

observed; and we are strong in custom." There was no real connection between throwing the dead body overboard and the ceasing of the storm, but the sailors had been brought up to think there was; and as this was a mere delusion it is properly called superstition. St. Paul tells the Athenians in his time that they were in all things too superstitious—that is, they expected to gain certain ends or attain special objects through some religious instrumentality, which was altogether irrational. On this account he called them superstitious; and he connects it with their devotions, so that it is clear he recognized the acts which they performed in connection with their altars as religious acts, for he calls them devotions. He implies, nevertheless, that the acts, however well meant on their part, were futile, and could not accomplish the effects which were intended, but, on the contrary, were mere superstitions. My construction of this statement is, that the Athenians in the time of St. Paul continued to be a religious people after their fashion and in the sense of performing religious acts, in honour of or propitiatory of certain superior beings whom they called gods, and that this superstitious state of mind had a strong and lively hold upon their feelings.

We have, then, at Athens in the time of Socrates a highly intellectual people, self-governed, and impressed with religious or superstitious feelings; and there is another point which must also be mentioned. St. Paul at the same time said of the Athenians that they were always seeking after new things. Anterior to the battle of Marathon the national life was comparatively undeveloped; they were governed by old traditions, and the history of their gods and the source of their religious ideas were not subjects of inquiry. What was contained in the teaching of their poets they clung to without investigation; but there came a new race of poets, and there sprung up philosophers who wanted to know the origin and cause of everything, and the sentiments of the

poets and the discussions of the philosophers created doubts which disturbed many quiet people. These people—and clever people they were—did not like the new style of talking and the new ideas. They preferred the old-fashioned ways and days, when no one questioned their customs or the stories connected with their gods. There was, therefore, a considerable gulf between one set of Athenians and another on the subject of religion. But the characteristic of the Athenians, that they sought after new things, prevented these matters going to sleep, and in various ways—upon the stage and in the schools of the philosophers—the religion of the country was disparaged, and was losing its hold upon the better educated classes.

Amongst this keen-witted, superstitious, inquisitive, and fermenting people Socrates lived. He seems to have followed no occupation, but to have devoted himself to the teaching and instruction of the people in his own peculiar and original manner. The Athenians lived out of doors, and Socrates in all public places devoted himself to the one occupation of interrogating and conversing with whoever was willing to talk with him. We must read Plato's Dialogues if we would understand the Socratic method. Early in the morning Socrates frequented the public walks, the gymnasia for bodily training, and the schools where the youth were receiving instruction. He was to be seen in the market-place at the hour when it was most crowded, among the booths and tables where goods were exposed for sale; his whole day was usually spent in this public manner. He talked with anyone, young or old, rich or poor, who sought to address him, and in the hearing of all who chose to stand by. Not only did he never either ask or receive any reward, but he made no distinction of persons, never withheld his conversation from anyone, and talked upon general topics to all. He conversed with politicians, sophists, soldiers, artisans, and studious or ambitious

youths. He visited all persons of interest in the city, male and female. Nothing could be more public, perpetual, and indiscriminate as to persons than his conversation. And as it was engaging, curious, and instructive to hear, certain persons were accustomed to attend him in public as companions and listeners. These men, a fluctuating body, were commonly known as his disciples or scholars; though neither he nor his personal friends ever employed the terms "teacher" and "disciple" to describe the relation between them. Many of them came, attracted by his reputation during the later years of his life, from other Grecian cities. No other person, so far as is known, in Athens or in any other Grecian city, appears to have manifested himself in this perpetual and indiscriminate manner as a public talker for instruction. All teachers either took money for their lessons or at least gave them apart from the multitude in a private house or garden to special pupils, with admissions and rejections at their own pleasure. By the peculiar mode of life which Socrates pursued, not only did his conversation reach the minds of a much wider circle, but he became more widely known as a person. While acquiring a few attached friends and admirers, and raising a certain intellectual interest in others, he at the same time provoked a large number of personal enemies.

This extreme publicity of life and conversation was one among the characteristics of Socrates, distinguishing him from all other teachers before or after. Next was his persuasion of a special religious mission, impulses and communications sent to him by the gods. Taking the belief of such intervention generally, it was indeed in no way peculiar to Socrates; it was the ordinary faith of the ancient world; and explanations of the phenomena of the world, resolving them into general laws, were regarded with disapprobation. Xenophon defends Socrates from the charge of religious innovation by asserting that he pretended to nothing which was not included in the creed

of every pious man. But this is not precisely what Socrates said in his defence before the judges. He had been accustomed, he said, constantly to hear, even from his childhood, a divine voice, interfering at moments when he was about to act, in the way of restraint, but never in the way of instigation. Later writers speak of this as the *dæmon* or genius of Socrates, but he himself does not personify it, but treats it merely as a divine sign, a prophetic or supernatural voice. He was accustomed not only to obey it implicitly, but to speak of it publicly and familiarly to others, so that the fact was well known to his friends and to his enemies. Though his persuasion on the subject was unquestionably sincere and his obedience constant, yet he never dwelt upon it himself as anything grand or awful, or entitling him to peculiar deference, but spoke of it often in his usual strain of familiar playfulness. But to his enemies and to the Athenian public it appeared in the light of an offensive heresy, an impious innovation on the orthodox creed, and a desertion of the recognized gods of Athens. Such was the *dæmon* or genius of Socrates as described by himself, and as conceived in the genuine Platonic Dialogues—a voice always prohibiting and bearing exclusively upon his own personal conduct. That which Plutarch and other admirers of Socrates conceived as a *dæmon* or intermediate being between God and man was looked upon by the Fathers of the Christian Church as a devil, and by some moderns as mere ironical phraseology on the part of Socrates himself. But though this peculiar form of inspiration belonged exclusively to him, there were also other ways in which he believed himself to have received the special mandates of the gods. Such distinct mission had been imposed upon him by dreams, by oracular intimations, and by every other means which the gods employed for signifying their special will. In his defence he said: “My service to the god has not only constrained me to live in constant poverty and neglect of political estimation, but has brought upon me a host of

bitter enemies in those whom I have examined and exposed, while the bystanders talk of me as a wise man, because they give me credit for wisdom respecting all the points on which my exposure of others turns. The difference between me and others is that I was fully conscious of my ignorance, whilst they were not; I was exempt from that capital error." Then he adds: "Whatever may be the danger and obloquy which I may incur, it would be monstrous, indeed, if, having maintained my place in the ranks as a soldier under your generals at Delium and Potideæ, I were now, from fear of death or anything else, to disobey the oracle and desert the post which the god has assigned to me, the duty of living for philosophy and cross-questioning both myself and others; and should you even now offer to acquit me, on condition of my renouncing this duty, I should tell you, with all respect and affection, that I will obey the god rather than you, and that I will persist until my dying day in cross-questioning you, exposing your want of wisdom and virtue, and reproaching you until the defect is remedied. My mission as your monitor is a mark of the special favour of the god to you, and if you condemn me it will be your loss, for you will find none other such. Perhaps you will ask me, 'Why, cannot you go away, Socrates, or live among us in peace and silence?' This is the hardest of all questions for me to answer to your satisfaction. If I tell you that silence on my part would be disobedience to the god, you will think me in jest, and not believe me. You will believe me still less if I tell you that the greatest blessing which can happen to a man is to carry on discussions every day about virtue and those other matters which you hear me canvassing when I cross-examine myself as well as others; and that life without such examination is no life at all. Nevertheless, so stands the fact, incredible as it may seem to you." This is the way in which Socrates defended himself before the judges as reported by Plato. It is plain evidence that he believed he was executing a

supernatural mission which he felt himself compelled to follow.

Nothing could well be more unpopular and obnoxious than the task which he undertook of cross-examining and convicting of ignorance every distinguished man whom he could approach. So violent, indeed, was the enmity which he occasionally provoked, that he was sometimes struck and maltreated, and frequently laughed to scorn. One cannot fail to be reminded, in reading the style of defence adopted by Socrates, of some words in the Acts of the Apostles, spoken before a Jewish tribunal, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken to you more than to God, judge ye," and, "we cannot but speak." St. Paul asks, "Am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" and then he says, "Necessity is laid upon me, and woe is me if I preach not." Stripped of any special signification, these expressions would convey the same meaning to the hearers, viz., that each of the speakers had, in his own opinion, some divine mission, and was, as it were, constrained to speak. The Athenians called St. Paul a babler, but they said also, "We would know what these things mean," and in this spirit they listened to Socrates. The apostle who stood upon Mars Hill and the philosopher with mean garments and ill-favoured features who addressed them daily in the streets were, no doubt, regarded at Athens as men of the same stamp, and we cannot but be struck through all the differences with a certain similarity which marks the one set of circumstances and the other, and we may say also with the same result, for each was subjected to violence. Dislike of contradiction, unwillingness to consider and to treat with respect another man's point of view, determination to resist any modification of thought or feeling, and an obstinate adherence to unintelligent custom, have been characteristics not of men here and there, but of all sorts and conditions of men in nearly all climes and times. When the men of Ephesus were foiled

in argument they overpowered their antagonists by force of lungs, shouting for the space of two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," and this sort of insensate shouting has often enough in the history of the world drowned the still small voice of reason and conscience in its appeals to men's better judgment and feelings.

But in order to be fair and just we must remember that Socrates and men of his stamp touch their contemporaries in a very tender part. Socrates admits that his mode of addressing his contemporaries was unpleasant to them, but then he alleges that it was a sort of medicine which was good for them. This they did not perceive; its present flavour and quality were disagreeable, and roused a feeling of hostility, and there did not exist at Athens, and there has not existed elsewhere amongst the common people generally, an openness of mind, a calmness of temper, and a judicial faculty which would enable them to weigh and measure the statements put before them. There has been no disposition to do this. "Am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" asks St. Paul, but this in the main is what people did, and do think, whenever that which the speaker calls truth happens to conflict with what the hearer has been accustomed to consider the truth. If we would do justice to the Athenians we must take account of this general infirmity of mankind, and then we shall have to ask ourselves also whether the Athenians were more or less tenacious and intemperate in their opposition and resistance to new teachers than their neighbours. There was, then, this antagonism between Socrates and a large part of the Athenians, mixed up also, as it may be assumed, with some political feeling, of which there was not a little in Athens. Socrates, be it remembered, was one of that party who thought that the functions of government belonged legitimately to those who knew best how to exercise them for the good of the governed. The legitimate king or governor was not the man who held the sceptre, nor the man elected by some

vulgar persons, nor he who had got the post by lot, nor he who had thrust himself in by force or fraud; but he alone who knew how to govern well; just as the pilot governed on shipboard, and the surgeon in a sick man's house, and the trainer in the palæstra, simply because their greater knowledge was an admitted fact. It was absurd, Socrates contended, to choose political officers by lot, when no one would trust himself on shipboard under care of a pilot picked up by chance.

Under these circumstances, a time came when his opponents determined to bring him before the tribunal, and the mode of doing it was this: Athens at that time was governed by ten Archons. One of these was called the King Archon, and his functions were almost all connected with religion. He was, as his title shows, the representative of the old kings in their capacity of high priest, and had to offer up sacrifices and prayer; moreover, indictments for impiety and similar offences were laid before him.

In the year 399 B.C., Melétus, Anytus, and Lykon presented against Socrates, and hung up in the appointed place, the portico of the office of the King Archon, an indictment in the following terms: "Socrates is guilty of crime, first, for not worshipping the gods whom the city worships, but introducing new divinities of his own; next, for corrupting the youth. The penalty due is death." The matter and manner of this proceeding are brought before us vividly in the dialogue of Plato named "Euthyphro," the scene of which is the porch of the King Archon where Socrates meets Euthyphro, who commences the conversation thus (I take it from Jowett's translation):—

Why have you left the Lyceum, Socrates; and what are you doing in the porch of the King Archon? Surely you are not engaged in an action before the King as I am.

Socrates.—Not in an action, Euthyphro; indictment is the word the Athenians use.

Euth. What! I suppose some one has been prosecuting you, for I cannot believe that you are the prosecutor of another.

Soc. Certainly not.

Euth. Then some else has been prosecuting you?

Soc. Yes.

Euth. And who is he?

Soc. A young man who is little known, Euthyphro; and I hardly know him. His name is Melêtus. Perhaps you may remember his appearance. He has a beak, and long straight hair, and a beard which is ill grown.

Euth. No, I do not remember him, Socrates. And what is the charge he brings against you?

Soc. What is the charge? Well, a very serious charge, which shows a great deal of character in the young man, and for which he is certainly not to be despised. He says he knows how the youth are corrupted and who are their corrupters. I fancy that he must be a wise man; and seeing that I am anything but a wise man, he has found me out, and is going to accuse me of corrupting his young friends. And of this our mother the State is to be the judge. Of all our political men he is the only one who seems to me to begin in the right way, with the cultivation of virtue in youth, and if he goes on as he has begun he will be a very great public benefactor.

Euth. I hope that he may, but I rather fear, Socrates, that the reverse will turn out to be the truth. My opinion is that in attacking you he is simply aiming a blow at the State in a sacred place. But in what way does he say that you corrupt the young?

Soc. He brings a wonderful accusation against me, which at first hearing excites surprise. He says that I am a poet or maker of gods, and that I make new gods and deny the existence of old ones. This is the ground of his indictment.

Euth. I understand, Socrates; he means to attack you about the familiar sign which occasionally, as you say, comes to you. He thinks that you are a neologian, and he is going to have you up before the Court for this. He knows that such a charge is readily received, for the world is always jealous of novelties in religion. And I know that when I myself speak in the Assembly about divine things, and foretell the future to them, they laugh at me as a madman; and yet every word that I say is true. But they are jealous of all of us. I suppose we must be brave and not mind them.

Soc. Their laughter, friend Euthyphro, is not a matter of much consequence. For a man may be thought wise; but the Athenians, I suspect, do not care much about this, until he begins to make other

men wise; and then, for some reason or other—perhaps, as you say, from jealousy—they are angry.

Euth. I have no desire to try conclusions with them about this.

Soc. I daresay you don't make yourself common, and are not apt to impart your wisdom. But I have a benevolent habit of pouring out myself to everybody, and would even pay for a listener, and I am afraid the Athenians know this; and therefore, as I was saying, if the Athenians would only laugh at me as you say they laugh at you, the time might pass gaily enough in the court; but perhaps they may be in earnest, and then what the end may be you soothsayers only can predict.

Euth. I daresay the affair will end in nothing, Socrates, and that you will win your cause; and I think I shall win mine.

Soc. By the powers, Euthyphro! how little does the common herd know of the nature of right and truth!

Euth. And how little do they know, Socrates, of the opinions of the gods about piety and impiety.

Soc. Good Heavens, Euthyphro! have you any precise knowledge of piety and impiety, and of divine things in general?

Euth. The best of Euthyphro, and that which distinguishes him, Socrates, from other men, is his exact knowledge of all these matters.

Soc. Rare friend! I think I cannot do better than be your disciple before the trial with Melétus comes on. Then I shall challenge him, and say that I have always had a great interest in all religious questions, and now, as he charges me with rash imaginations and innovations in religion, I have become your disciple. I suppose that people think me wrong because I cannot believe all the current stories about the gods. But as you are so well informed about them and approve them, I cannot do better than assent to your superior wisdom. What else can I do, confessing as I must that I know nothing of them? I wish you would tell me whether you really believe that they are true.

Euth. Yes, Socrates; and things more wonderful still of which the world is in ignorance.

Soc. And do you really believe that the gods fought with one another, and had dire quarrels, battles, and the like, as the poets say, and as you may find represented in the works of great artists? The temples are full of them; and notably the robe of Athene, which is carried up to the Acropolis at the great Panathenæa, is embroidered with them. Are all these tales of the gods true, Euthyphro?

Euth. Yes, Socrates.

The conversation is carried on much further, until Euthyphro says at last :—

I really do not know, Socrates, how to say what I mean, for somehow or other our arguments, on whatever ground we rest them, seem to turn round and walk away.

Euthyphro was one of those superficial and self-satisfied people who are as numerous in the world now as they were then. Socrates flatters his vanity in order that he may convince him of his ignorance; but he does not succeed, and the conversation ends as it began, leaving Euthyphro with the same good opinion of himself. The dialogue shows us that there was, in the conversation of Socrates, what was likely to create distrust and dissatisfaction among those who believed without inquiry all the stories they had learned about the gods, and this feeling was at the bottom of the opposition to Socrates.

The change which was making itself felt in Athens during what may be called the Socratic period is visible in the writings of her poets and philosophers. Æschylus looks at human affairs from the standpoint of those mysterious powers which filled the early world with fear and terror; Sophocles tones down this austerity; Euripides introduces yet more largely the human element, and disparages much which was reckoned divine. Mrs. Browning has described their characteristics in a very general way.

Oh, our Æschylus the thunderous,
How he drove the bolted breath
Through the cloud, to wedge it ponderous
In the gnarled oak beneath!
Oh, our Sophocles the loyal,
Who was born to monarch's place,
And who made the whole world royal
Less by kingly power than grace!
Our Euripides, the human,
With his droppings of warm tears,
And his touches of things common,
Till they rose to touch the spheres!

The older-fashioned Athenians regarded Euripides with suspicion. The new aspects which he introduced, the freer handling which he adopted, unsettled the traditions and beliefs which formerly ruled at Athens ; and there was thus a large party with whom Euripides was unpopular. The feeling of this party was embodied in the fierce ridicule of Aristophanes. We may judge of the growth of new notions by comparing Æschylus with Euripides, but the invective of Aristophanes brings into much stronger contrast the difference that actually existed. No doubt Aristophanes was a violent caricaturist, but he was the mouthpiece of a party which clung to that past which Euripides and his party were prone to discredit. We are thinking of Socrates, we are thinking of his accusers, we are thinking of the charge of impiety brought against him, and we must take account of the contest which was being waged at the time between the old thought and the new, and neither was wholly good or wholly bad. Aristophanes exaggerated, but we may be sure there was a basis of reality in his caricatures. Many people believed that the men with whom Socrates associated were such as Aristophanes depicted, and it is men's beliefs which lead to actions. Aristophanes wrote a comedy called the "Clouds," which was acted in Athens some twenty years before the trial of Socrates, and he wrote it for the express purpose of holding up Socrates to public ridicule. I will read you part of a scene from this play, from which you will see in what light Socrates was exhibited to his fellow-citizens, and what sort of an opinion so keen an intellect as that of Aristophanes formed of him and his teaching. It must be remembered that Socrates and Aristophanes were on friendly terms, though it seems rather surprising that they should be.

The theatre of Athens, as we are told, held an audience of 30,000 persons, and the science and skill of Greek artists furnished all manner of contrivances which gave effect to the performance. In the scene from which I make my extract there are only two persons on the stage, Socrates

and Strepsiades, and by some means clouds are represented which fulfil the part of the chorus—a very important part of a Greek play. The scene introduces us to Socrates. Strepsiades is a stupid sort of Athenian, in debt and difficulty, who has determined to visit what he called “the thought shop,” to learn the new logic which he hopes will enable him to cheat his creditors. He knocks loudly at the door, which is opened to him, and being admitted, a conversation intended to ridicule the new notions takes place, the clouds, as the chorus, joining in it. The chorus has just spoken, and Strepsiades exclaims :—

Streps. Oh, Earth! what a sound, how august and profound! it fills me with wonder and awe.

Soc. These, these then alone, for true Deities own, the rest are all God-ships of straw.

Streps. Let Zeus be left out: He’s a god beyond doubt: come, that you can scarcely deny.

Soc. Zeus, indeed! there’s no Zeus: don’t you be so obtuse.

Streps. No Zeus up aloft in the sky!

Then, you first must explain, who it is sends the rain; or I really must think you are wrong.

Soc. Well, then, be it known, these send it alone: I can prove it by arguments strong.

Was there ever a shower seen to fall in an hour when the sky was all cloudless and blue?

Yet on a fine day, when the Clouds are away, he might send one, according to you.

Streps. Well, it must be confessed that chimes in with the rest: your words I am forced to believe.

Yet before, I had dreamed that the rain-water streamed from Zeus and his wonderful sieve.

But whence then, my friend, does the thunder descend? that does make me quake with affright!

Soc. Why! ’tis they, I declare, as they roll through the air.

Streps. What the Clouds? did I hear you aright?

Soc. Ay: for when to the brim filled with water they swim, by Necessity carried along,

They are hung up on high in the vault of the sky, and so by Necessity strong

In the midst of their course, they clash with great force, and thunder away without end.

Streps. But is it not He who compels this to be? does not Zeus this Necessity send?

Soc. No Zeus have we there, but a Vortex of air.

Streps. What! Vortex? that's something, I own.

I knew not before, that Zeus was no more, but Vortex was placed on his throne!

But I have not yet heard to what cause you referred the thunder's majestic roar.

Soc. Yes, 'tis they, when on high full of water they fly, and then, as I told you before,

By Compression impelled, as they clash, are compelled a terrible clatter to make.

Streps. Well, but tell me from Whom comes the bolt through the gloom, with its awful and terrible flashes;

And wherever it turns, some it sings and burns, and some it reduces to ashes!

For this 'tis quite plain, let who will send the rain, that Zeus against perjurers dashes.

Soc. And how, you old fool of a dark-ages school, and an antediluvian wit,

If the perjured they strike, and not all men alike, have they never Cleonymus hit?

Then of Simon again, and Theorus explain: known perjurers yet they escape.

But he smites his own shrine with these arrows divine, and 'Sunium, Attica's cape,'

And the ancient gnarled oaks: now what prompted those strokes?

They never forswore I should say.

Streps. Can't say that they do: your words appear true. Whence comes then the thunderbolt, pray?

Soc. When a wind that is dry, being lifted on high, is suddenly pent into these,

It swells up their skin, like a bladder, within, by Necessity's changeless decrees:

Till compressed very tight, it bursts them outright, and away with an impulse so strong,

That at last by the force and the swing of its course, it takes fire as it whizzes along.

We have seen Socrates at the porch of the King Archon, and we have heard what he had to say about the

prosecution. We must now inquire what sort of a tribunal it was before which he was arraigned.

At Athens, in the time of Socrates, 6,000 citizens were elected annually under the name of dikasts, for the purpose of dealing with the civil and criminal business of the city which came before the courts of law. These 6,000 dikasts were divided into what we should call ten juries of 500 each; the remaining 1,000 being reserved for unavoidable vacancies. These ten juries had to hear and determine during the year such complaints and breaches of law as were brought for trial. They were chosen by lot, and they were sworn as our juries are. Which of the ten should be taken on any particular occasion was decided by lot. It is not certain of what exact number each dikastery actually consisted, but it is known they were always numerous. A jury with us must consist of twelve; under the Athenian system 500 were told off to form a jury, though less than 500 might try cases. None of the dikasts could know in what causes they would be employed, so that no one could tamper with them beforehand. They were in reality nothing but jury trials applied, on a scale broad, systematic, unaided, and uncontrolled, and they exhibit in exaggerated proportions both the excellence and the defects of the jury system as compared with decisions by trained and professional judges. The dikasts judged of the law as well as of the fact; the laws were not numerous, and were expressed in few, and for the most part familiar, words. Each dikastery construed the law for itself without being bound by decisions which had been given previously. This method of procedure was, no doubt, adopted to protect the citizens against the domination of the rich and powerful. Good or bad, it was applicable to all, and Socrates fell under its operation. The dikast must be considered to represent the average men of the time and neighbourhood, exempt, indeed, from pecuniary corruption or personal fear, deciding according to what he thinks justice or to

some genuine feeling of equity, mercy, religion, or patriotism which, in reference to the case before him, he thinks as good as justice, but not exempt from sympathies, antipathies, prejudices, all of which act the more powerfully because there is often no consciousness of their presence, and because they even appear essential to his ideas of plain and straightforward good sense. We need only look to our own State trials, or to trials which have taken place in times of political excitement, to notice how widely and wildly juries have given verdicts, and we may safely say that five hundred Athenian dikasts would be as likely to return a fair and reasonable verdict, according to their means of judging, as an English jury.

The actual number of dikasts who tried Socrates is said to have been 501. The accusers of Socrates had to prove their indictment against him. They addressed the dikasts, and produced such evidence as they thought necessary; and we must bear in mind that the sort of offence with which he was charged is not difficult to establish, and is difficult to disprove. We see that Euthyphro thought that the genius or dæmon by which Socrates professed to be guided would be classed by the Athenians with the gods. In the Acts of the Apostles, the Athenians say of St. Paul, "he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods." In the original the word translated gods is *δαιμονίων*; so that if this word dæmon was at Athens connected with the directing voice which Socrates so often referred to, the Athenians might not unfairly do what our translators have done—interpreted it by the word "gods." We do not know what Socrates meant by the word, and the Athenians did not know. Xenophon makes use of it in connection with Socrates. Was it a person, or what was it? What did the Athenians think of it? For that is the criterion to which we must bring it; and if the language of Socrates was ambiguous and left it doubtful what was meant, the more religious of the dikasts would be apt to put a bad construction upon his language. His duty

as an Athenian citizen, according to the notions prevailing there and then, was to conform to the religious customs of his countrymen, and all his searching and probing of men's minds would tend to create suspicion, and his talk about the *dæmon* or voice which directed him would puzzle his audience still more, and add to the suspicion with which he was regarded. Existences are divided into persons and things. Into which of these categories was this admonisher of Socrates to be placed? His accusers could, without doubt, put their case in such a way that their charge would seem to be made out; it was precisely the ordinary conduct of Socrates which was alleged against him. The bulk of the Athenians were content with their religion. Socrates had, day by day for twenty years, tried to make them dissatisfied with themselves in connection with subjects which had relation to their gods. He had perplexed and vexed them; he had convicted them of ignorance, and wounded their self-love; he had interrogated them respecting justice and piety and devotion; and he had shown them how hollow their notions were respecting them, and they were naturally irritated. Socrates very well knew that they disliked him on account of his conduct, but he was not to be turned from his purpose, and whether they would hear or whether they would forbear, as the old Hebrew prophet says, he would persevere.

We see, then, that the accusers of Socrates might not have a difficult task in making out their accusation. They were the plaintiffs; they made their speeches and produced their evidence, and then Socrates had to reply. His reply is contained in that dialogue of Plato called "The Apology." We do not know how much of it was actually spoken by Socrates, but we may be sure that it represents the substance and spirit of what he said. Xenophon tells us that Socrates might have been acquitted if in any moderate degree he would have conciliated the favour of the *dikasts*; but his speech throughout breathes a spirit of

defiance. He stood before his judges with a lofty sense of conscious rectitude ; he appealed from the decision of a tribunal necessarily composed of men who were in different degrees prejudiced against him to that higher judicature which sprang from his own reason and conscience ; moreover, he was not afraid to face the consequence of his actions. It was not an uncommon thing for a man who was accused before the dikasts to bring his wife and children into court, and through them to appeal to the compassion of his judges. Socrates would do nothing of the kind. He knew that his course of life had laid him open to the charges made against him ; he knew that his freedom of speech had offended the Athenians ; he knew that, in fact, there was a great gulf between him and them ; not that he disowned or denied his country's gods, but he sought to awaken and arouse some new thought among his countrymen, and to translate the forms and shams which made up much of their religion into some intelligent and living reality. Socrates knew that his purpose had been good and noble, but he knew also that it had been misunderstood and misrepresented, and he was prepared to pay the penalty. He had for a long series of years attempted to teach the Athenians in an indirect but searching manner ; he was convinced that in no other way could he get a hearing, and so he persevered. The proof of his judgment and his skill, and of the general fairness and toleration of the Athenians, is that he was allowed to exercise his self-imposed and irritating vocation for so many years. We have only to recollect what sharp and sudden commotions occurred when the special religious feelings of Jews and Asiatics were assailed in order to measure the intellectual difference between the one set of people and the other.

One or two extracts may be made from the defence of Socrates. He says : " The young men who followed me about, who are the sons of wealthy persons and with

much leisure, by nature delight in hearing men cross-questioned; and they often imitate me among themselves. Then they try their hand at cross-questioning other people, and I imagine they find a great abundance of men who think that they know a great deal when, in truth, they know little or nothing. And then the persons who are cross-questioned are angry with me instead of with themselves, and say, Socrates is an abominable fellow who corrupts the young. And when they were asked, Why, what does he do? what does he teach? they have nothing to say. But not to seem at a loss, they repeat the stock charges against all philosophers, and say that he investigates things in the air and under the earth, and that he teaches people to disbelieve in the gods, and to make the worst appear the better reason. And so they have filled your ears with their fierce slanders for a long time, for they are zealous and fierce and numerous. They are well disciplined, too, and plausible in speech. On these grounds Melétus and Anytus and Lykon have attacked me. Melétus is angry with me for the poets, Anytus for the artisans and public men, and Lykon for the orators. And I should be surprised if I were able in so short a time to remove this prejudice of yours which has grown so great." We see from this the extent of the ill-feeling which existed against Socrates. He knew it, and he seems to admit that it was natural for the Athenians in their then state of knowledge to dislike and oppose his teaching. Further on he says: "If you were to say to me, 'Socrates, this time we will let you go on condition that you cease from carrying on this search and from philosophy. If you are found doing this again you shall die'—I say, if you offered to let me go on these grounds I should reply: 'Athenians, I hold you in the highest regard and love, but I will obey the god rather than you; and as long as I have breath and power I will not cease from philosophy and from exhorting you and setting forth the truth to any of you whom I meet, say-

ing as I am wont : “ My excellent friend, you are a citizen of Athens, a city very great and very famous for wisdom and power of mind ; are you not ashamed of caring so much for the making of money and for reputation and honour ? Will you not spend thought or care on wisdom and truth and perfecting your soul ? ” ’ And if he dispute my words, and say that he does care for these things, I shall not forthwith release him and go away ; I shall question him and cross-examine him ; and if I think that he has not virtue, though he says that he has, I shall reproach him for setting the lowest value on the most important things and the highest value on the most worthless.” He winds up in this way : “ I do not think it right to entreat the judge nor to gain acquittal by entreaties : he should be convinced by argument. He does not sit to make a present of justice, but to give judgment ; and he has sworn to judge according to law, and not to favour a man whom he likes. And so we ought not to ask you to forswear yourselves ; and you ought not to allow us to do so, for then neither of us would be acting righteously. Therefore, Athenians, do not require me to do these things, for I hold them to be neither good nor just nor holy, more especially now when Melêtus is indicting me for impiety. To you, therefore and to God, I commit my cause, to be determined by you as is best for you and me.”

The dikasts, having heard the accusation and the defence, gave their votes. For acquitting Socrates there were 220 : he was condemned by 281, so that the majority against him was 61. His accusers were then asked what punishment they proposed, and Melêtus replied “ Death.” Socrates was then at liberty to propose a lighter penalty, and he said : “ There are many reasons, O men of Athens, why I am not grieved at the vote of condemnation. I expected this, and am only surprised that the votes are so nearly equal, for I thought the majority against me would have been larger. And so he proposes death as the penalty. And what shall I propose on my

part, O men of Athens? Clearly that which is my due. And what is that which I ought to pay or to receive? What shall be done to the man who has never had the wit to be idle during his whole life, who has been careless of what the many care about—wealth and family interests and military offices, and speaking in the Assembly and magistracies and plots and parties? What shall be done to such an one? Doubtless some good thing, if he has his reward; and the good should be of a kind suitable to him. What would be a reward suitable to a poor man who is your benefactor, and who desires leisure that he may instruct you? Perhaps you may think I am braving you in saying this, as in what I said before about the tears and prayers; but this is not so. I speak rather because I am convinced that I never intentionally wronged anyone. I will not say of myself that I deserve any evil, or propose any penalty. Why should I? Because I am afraid of the penalty of death which Melêtus proposes? When I do not know whether death is a good or an evil, why should I propose a penalty which would certainly be an evil?" He then mentions imprisonment or banishment, which, he says, are real evils, and he will not propose them; and as to a fine, he asserts that he has no money, but that perhaps his friends might be security for a small sum. In the end, as he proposes no mitigation of the penalty, which is even possible, the sentence of death is passed. On this part of the subject, Dr. Thirlwall, late Bishop of St. David's, says: "It seems that the law required judgment to be passed according to the proposal either of the prosecutor or the defendant."

Having named Dr. Thirlwall, I will make another extract from his work, as it throws light on the subject, and raises a question which we are bound to discuss. He says: "The time in which Socrates was brought to trial was one in which great zeal was professed, and some was undoubtedly felt, for the revival of the ancient institutions, civil and religious, under which Athens had attained her

past greatness; and it was to be expected that all who traced the public calamities to the neglect of the old laws and usages should consider Socrates a dangerous person." This is an admission which is made by all the writers I am acquainted with. That Athenian life and thought were in a state of transition everyone is compelled to admit, and it is important, coming from Dr. Thirlwall; and we are bound to follow it up by the further consideration that a fermentation of civil and religious ideas, and a feeling that false ones were gaining the ascendancy and were tending to national calamity, was a state of mind unfavourable to what may be called judicial fairness. The Athenians thought, as Dr. Thirlwall allows, that certain public calamities were attributable to the decay and the neglect of old laws and usages, and if they believed that the teaching of Socrates promoted this decay and neglect, then it was a respectable feeling which led them to dislike and to oppose him. His notions and theirs were at variance. They believed him to be wrong; he believed them to be so. He was much wiser than they were; but where is the people who are willing to admit this under such circumstances? On their side they had the prescription of the past, the persuasion that their country had grown great by means and instrumentalities which were, in their opinion, crumbling in pieces, and which it seemed to them Socrates was helping to undermine, and which it is probable he was really doing. Dr. Thirlwall has a very elaborate note in reply to German criticism on the case of Socrates, and he concludes in these words: "There never was a case in which murder was more clearly committed under the forms of legal procedure than in the trial of Socrates. Judicial murders more atrocious in their circumstances may have been perpetrated by the Roman Senate under the Emperors, by the Holy Office, and by the Revolutionary Tribunal under the Reign of Terror."

Dr. Thirlwall was a man of great learning and of sound

judgment; but this dictum of his appears to me, though it seems rash to say it, a hasty and inconsiderate one. He had just before said in respect of religious opinion in Athens: "There was no canon, no book by which a doctrine could be tried; no living authority to which appeal could be made for the decision of religious controversies. Beyond the bare fact of the existence of the beings who were objects of public worship, there was hardly a circumstance in their history which had not been related in many different ways; and there was no form of the legend which had more or less claim to be received than another. So that if Socrates rejected every version of the fable which appeared to him to have an immoral tendency, he was only exercising a right which could not be legally disputed, and was taking no greater liberty than had been used by many others without any scandal."

This argument is in every way, as it seems to me, a fallacious one. If there was an offence concerning religious belief and practice, dealt with as impiety by Athenian law, and if there existed no canon or book by which religious opinions were to be tested, by what means were the dikasts to ascertain when the offence was committed, and how are they to be blamed if, in a confusedly undefinable offence which they were bound to try, they came to a conclusion in accordance with those views and beliefs which, however imperfectly understood by them, were almost universally acknowledged? To know whether a man has committed an offence, it is absolutely needful that the offence should be defined. Legal murder is not killing a man, but killing him under defined circumstances and with particular intentions; and impiety, if not defined, is just what each man thinks it to be, and no two men may exactly agree about it; who then is to blame—the law or the jury? Besides, no one knew better than the Bishop that the meaning of such words as these was just the main controversy between Socrates and his hearers. It is the very essence of the discussion between him and

Euthyphro. "What," he asks, "is impiety?" Euthyphro answers, but his answers fail when tested. It was precisely this want of critical faculty which Socrates was for ever denouncing. The Bishop admits that there was no canon or book by which religious opinions were to be tested, and he blames the Athenian dikasts because they could not supply the deficiency. He had surely forgotten the causes which had come before our own Ecclesiastical Courts of late years, and which his letters prove he had considered so deeply; and how the keenest intellects of a trained legal profession had been unable to agree upon the meaning of documents which they had to construe. He must have forgotten how conflicting are the interpretations which our Judges and Law Courts put upon the words of the same Act of Parliament; and yet he impugns the honesty of the Athenian dikasts because, being sworn without the aid of any canon or book to determine whether certain words and acts amounted to impiety and to the disparagement of their gods, they came to a conclusion which is not acceptable to an English Bishop of the nineteenth century who has access to books and commentaries which they never heard of, and which, in fact, did not exist. The Bishop acknowledges that the biographies of these fabulous divinities were in a most chaotic condition. Their genealogies were utterly out of joint, their actions apocryphal, contradictory, and absurd. Put into the Bishop's critical crucible, no doubt these inconsistencies and extravagances emerge; but then he forgets to tell us that this apparatus of criticism the dikasts did not possess, and that they had to decide according to that version of the history in which they had been instructed and which had fallen in their way. The Bishop knew very well, when writing his history in a secluded parish in Yorkshire, that if he had asked his Sunday congregation a few plain questions upon high matters of theology, they would not have given very intelligent answers, though they had been taught their catechism and their creed, and for

years had had the advantage of his own, no doubt, most instructive teaching. The Athenian dikasts lacked this special light and guidance; they had as hard a question to solve; and when we are measuring their merits and demerits, we must compare them not with the profoundest scholar and divine of this century, but with the average people we meet with, and we must give them the benefit of any doubt that we may feel. Further, Dr. Thirlwall quite overlooks the fact that, though the right of discussing what he calls these fables might be exercised by a writer of poetry or of philosophy without shocking the sentiments of the populace, Socrates took a course which brought him into active, ceaseless, and personal conflict with every man upon whom he could fasten his interrogatories. Once more, Dr. Thirlwall alleges "the difficulty which most persons in modern times have felt in reconciling the pure and lofty ideas which Socrates appears to have formed of the Divine nature with a belief in the doctrines or fables of the Greek polytheism." He does not notice the circumstance that what to him is now fable, to an Athenian was once fact; and if he is astonished that Socrates, with pure and lofty ideas, believed what are now reckoned absurd fables, had he no excuse or toleration for the Athenian dikast, who had not reached the pure and lofty ideal of Socrates, but only that meaner level of those absurd fables which Socrates, while professedly believing, handled in such way that the simple Athenian dikast was unable to reconcile with honest belief and sincerity? Dr. Thirlwall was puzzled that Socrates held what appeared to him to be contradictory and antagonistic beliefs. To the Athenian dikast it was equally inconceivable that Socrates really believed the common creed, while speaking and acting as he did; he could not make these two things fit, as Dr. Thirlwall could not make the others fit. Let us do justice to the Athenian dikast and to the Athenian people, remembering

that the events we are considering happened something like four hundred years before the Christian era.

It is clear that there existed at Athens in the time of Socrates some law against what was then reckoned impiety; some legal condemnation of the conduct which disregarded or outraged the general feeling respecting the gods and their worship. There are such laws in England now. That which Englishmen hold sacred the law protects, and it punishes those who violate it. What is such a violation as the law intends to forbid may be difficult to determine, and honest men may easily disagree about it; and whatever the particular acts might be which Athenian law meant to put down might be very dubious and debatable; but a jury must give a verdict, and our own law and practice, until lately, furnished the jury and left them without fire and light until they agreed. Something at Athens, as well as in England, was and is offensive to the religious feelings of the people, and, for this reason, liable to legal penalty. It is curious to notice how the strong sense of a Roman proconsul broke through this kind of accusation; and, moreover, what a striking contrast there is between the Jew and the Greek in the presence of that which contradicted his custom and belief. We are told in the Acts of the Apostles that the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, because, as they said, he "persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law." This was substantially the same charge as that brought against Socrates, and, moreover, it was at the Greek city of Corinth that this happened, and it produced an instant outburst of insurrection by the Jews. Before Paul had time to make any defence the Roman proconsul Gallio said: "If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O Jews, reason would that I should bear with you; but if it be a question of words and names and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such." This Roman proconsul had a

clear perception of the province of government. But the other idea was, and had been, far more prevalent—the idea that government should not only restrain bad and unjust acts, but should control and punish speculative opinions and what it might consider the misuse of Gallio's "words and names."

We should have to travel very far back to find the origin of this notion. But we are all familiar with the history of Nebuchadnezzar, which was not of much earlier date than that of Socrates. There was no circumlocution or beating about the bush with this ruler of Babylon. He decreed in the most peremptory style that everybody was to worship as he wished, on pain of being burned to death. Athens was much more moderate than this Oriental monarch; nevertheless, his example was followed everywhere, with more or less stringency, not amongst Pagans only of that era, but amongst Christians of a much later one. In the 4th century of our era, Theodosius the Great made certain religious acts of his heathen subjects punishable as high treason with death, and for other acts of the same sort he inflicted ruinous fines and forfeitures. Gibbon tells us that he repeatedly enforced these persecuting decrees with the applause of a large portion of his subjects. The latest English historian of these times—a most painstaking, pictorial, and impartial writer, Mr. Hodgkin—says: "For some generations, with quiet, earnest deliberateness, the whole power of the Emperors was employed in making all Christians think alike, and in preventing non-Christians thinking at all."*

The Theodosian code remains to testify to the severity of its enactments. It is a sort of landmark in the region we are traversing; and for many centuries such legislation was in the ascendant. Two or three examples from the many which might be selected will be enough for our purpose. In the 16th century of grace, Giordano Bruno, a

* Italy and her Invaders.

man of literary eminence and of blameless life, was burned at Rome on account of his religious opinions, one of the official spectators of the burning exclaiming, "Such is the way in which we at Rome deal with impious men," impiety being exactly the offence with which Socrates was charged. In the same century, Michael Servetus, a man of unimpeachable character, and an author of distinction, was burned at Geneva because his writings were judged to be heretical. These men, and a host of others who might be named, were put to death, not for any crime which they committed, but because, like Socrates, they held opinions and propagated them, which were condemned by their contemporaries. History could furnish us with a long catalogue of such cases. I will select one more from our own annals. Whoever has been to Oxford and taken note of its beauties will have observed in one of the streets a monument, erected some few years ago to commemorate the public burning, near the spot where it stands, of three English Bishops—Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer. There was no crime proved against these men; they were put to death because, like Socrates, they diverged from the then dominant religion. Our apology for the Athenian dikast is that he believed Socrates to be a heretic; and it is exactly this offence which was charged against those three Bishops, and for which they suffered. Socrates, as a man and a citizen, could fearlessly appeal to his judges and say: "I never intentionally wronged anyone," and not less truly could these three Bishops make the same challenge; as citizens they were in all respects the equals, it may be the superiors, of Socrates.

Shakespeare, who lived not many years after Cranmer, knew his history and the traditions connected with it, and he puts into his mouth these words, addressed to the Council:—

My good lords, hitherto, in all the progress
Both of my life and office, I have laboured,
And with no little study, that my teaching

And the strong course of my authority
Might go one way and safely ; and the end
Was ever to do well ; nor is there living—
I speak it with a single heart, my lords—
A man that more detests, more stirs against
Both in his private conscience and his place,
Defacers of the public peace, than I do.
Pray Heaven, the King may never find a heart
With less allegiance in it. Men that make
Envy and crooked malice nourishment
Dare bite the best. I do beseech your lordships
That in this case of justice, my accusers,
Be what they will, may stand forth face to face
And freely urge against me.

It is not pertinent to inquire into the particular opinions and beliefs which have brought men into peril and to death. We stand beside the culprit and his accusers, and it is a charge of impiety which is brought against him. On such a charge it was that Socrates was arraigned. The impiety of one age is not in its form that of another ; the divinities may be different, but so far as the offender is concerned, he has always contravened the public estimate of them, and for this he is condemned.

We are not concerned with this general question, except so far as it is applicable to Athens. We have a right to compare her case with that of others, and it is needful to revive these old stories in order that we may relieve Athens of some odium, if we find that other States were not only as harsh as she was, but that, having better opportunities and wiser teaching, they were even more unrelenting and harder of heart. Let us carry our comparison to the bitter end, and for this purpose I quote from Tennyson's "Queen Mary" the account of the burning of Cranmer.

Enter Peters.

Peters, my gentleman, an honest Catholic,
Who follow'd with the crowd to Cranmer's fire.
One that would neither misreport nor lie,

Not to gain paradise ; no, nor if the Pope
 Charged him to do it—he is white as death.
 Peters, how pale you look ! you bring the smoke
 Of Cranmer's burning with you.

Peters.

Twice or thrice

The smoke of Cranmer's burning wrapt me round.

Howard.

Peters, you know me Catholic, but English.
 Did he die bravely ? Tell me that, or leave
 All else untold.

Peters.

My lord, he died most bravely.

Howard.

Then tell me all.

Paget.

Ay, Master Peters, tell us.

Peters.

You saw him how he passed among the crowd ;
 And ever as he walk'd the Spanish friars
 Still plied him with entreaty and reproach :
 But Cranmer, as the helmsman at the helm
 Steers, ever looking to the happy haven
 Where he shall rest at night, moved to his death ;
 And I could see that many silent hands
 Came from the crowd and met his own ; and thus,
 When we had come where Ridley burnt with Latimer,
 He, with a cheerful smile, as one whose mind
 Is all made up, in haste put off the rags
 They had mock'd his misery with, and all in white,
 His long white beard, which he had never shaven
 Since Henry's death, down-sweeping to the chain,
 Wherewith they bound him to the stake, he stood,
 More like an ancient father of the Church,
 Than heretic of these times ; and still the friars
 Plied him, but Cranmer only shook his head,
 Or answer'd them in smiling negatives ;
 Whereat Lord Williams gave a sudden cry :—
 " Make short ! make short ! " and so they lit the wood.

Then Cranmer lifted his left hand to heaven,
 And thrust his right into the bitter flame ;
 And crying, in his deep voice, more than once,
 " This hath offended—this unworthy hand !"
 So held it till it all was burned, before
 The flame had reached his body ; I stood near—
 Mark'd him—he never uttered moan of pain ;
 He never stirr'd or writhed, but, like a statue,
 Unmoving in the greatness of the flame,
 Gave up the ghost ; and so past martyr-like—
 Martyr I may not call him—past—but whither ?

" Look on that picture and on this."

I quote again from " Social Life in Greece," by the Rev. Professor Mahaffy.

There is a very different point suggested by the life of Socrates, which proves the refined culture of the Athenians from another side. It is an universal contrast between civilized and semi-civilized societies (not to speak of barbarians), that the penalty of death, when legally incurred, is in the former carried out without cruelty and torture, whereas in the latter the victim of the law is farther punished by insults and by artificial pains. The punishments devised by kings and barons in the middle ages, the hideous torments devised by the Church for the bodies of those whose souls were doomed to even worse for ever and ever—these cases will occur to any reader from the history of semi-civilized nations. It will not perhaps strike him that our own country was hardly better even in the present century, and that the formula now uttered by the judge in sentencing to death suggests by its very wording horrible cruelties threatened almost within the memory of living men. " That you be hanged by the neck, *till you are dead,*" points to the form uttered in the courts of Dublin within this century, though not then literally carried out. It ran thus : " It is therefore ordered by the Court that they and each of them be taken from the bar of the Court where they now stand, to the place from whence they came—the gaol : that their irons be there stricken off, that they be from thence carried to the common place of execution, the gallows ; and that they and each of them be hanged by the neck, *but not until they be dead, for whilst they are yet alive they are to be taken down, their entrails are to be taken out of their body, and whilst they are yet alive they are to be burned before their faces ;* their heads are then to be respectively cut off ; their bodies to be respectively divided into four quarters ; and their respective heads and bodies to be at His Majesty's disposal."

Let us now compare these formulæ, used by the most cultivated and humane European nation in the nineteenth century, with the enactments of the Athenian democracy four hundred years before Christ. In the first place, there was no penalty permitted severer than a quiet and painless death. There were no antecedent insults and cruelties, no aggravations, no exhibitions before a heartless and ribald mob. In the next place, care had been taken to ascertain the most easy and gentle death, as Xenophon distinctly implies (*Apol. Socr.* § 7), and for this reason death by poisoning with hemlock was introduced—at what exact period, we cannot say. Here, again, the Athenians were in advance even of the present day, when death by hanging, in the hands of ignorant and careless officials, is often a slow death, and a death of torture. But all this is to my mind far less significant than the *manner* of Athenian executions, as compared with those even of our day. We have fortunately in Plato's "Phædo" a detailed account of this scene, which, however imaginary as to the conversations introduced, must have lost all its dramatic propriety and force to Plato's contemporaries, had not the details been reproduced from life with faithful accuracy.

There is, I think, in all Greek literature no scene which ought to make us more ashamed of our boasted Christian culture. The condemned, on the day of execution, was freed from his chains, and allowed to have his family and friends present in his cell, as they had already been during the nights of his imprisonment.

The condemned then was left with his family and friends, to make his arrangements and bequests, to give his last directions, to comfort and to be comforted by those dearest to him. When the hour of death approached, the gaoler came in, and left the cup of poison with the victim, giving him directions how to take it, and merely adding that it must be done before a certain hour. He then retired and left the prisoner in his last moments to the care of his friends. They sat about him as life gradually ebbed away, and closed his eyes in peace.

Compare all this humane and kindly feeling with the gauntness and horror of our modern executions, as detailed to us with morbid satisfaction by our daily newspapers. The whole scene in Socrates' prison is, as I said, the greatest proof I know in Greek literature of a culture exceeding in refinement and humanity that of our own day.

We have to consider, in relation to all these various acts, that at the times of which we have been speaking, it was an offence, a crime, to disbelieve and to dispute the publicly-approved religion; and we may fairly ask which

State, upon the whole, was mildest and most tolerant in its method of punishing, and we may at least award to the State so distinguished the palm of humanity.

Let us now follow Socrates into his prison. The story of his last hours is to be found in Plato's dialogue, "Phædo," and it is introduced in this fashion: After an interval of some months or years, and at Phlius, a town of Sicyon, Echecrates and some of his friends meet Phædo and ask him to narrate to them the circumstances of the death of Socrates, as the minutest particulars of the event are interesting to distant friends. Thereupon Phædo commences the narrative, from which I can only select a few passages. Echecrates asks Phædo:—

Were you yourself, Phædo, in the prison with Socrates on the day when he drank the poison?

Ph. Yes, Echecrates, I was.

Ech. I wish you would tell me about his death. What did he say in his last hours? We were told that he died by taking poison, but no one knew anything more; for none of us ever go to Athens now, and Athenians do not come here, so that we have had no account of what happened.

Ph. Did you not hear of the proceedings of the trial?

Ech. Yes; some one told us about the trial; and we could not understand why, having been condemned, he was put to death, not at the time, but long afterwards. What was the reason of this?

Ph. An accident, Echecrates. The reason was that the stern of the ship which the Athenians send to Delos happened to have been crowned on the day before he was tried.

Ech. What is this ship?

Ph. This is the ship in which, as the Athenians say, Theseus went to Crete when he took with him the fourteen youths, and was the saviour of them and of himself. And they were said to have vowed to Apollo at the time that if they were saved they would make an annual pilgrimage to Delos. Now this custom still continues, and the whole period of the voyage to and from Delos, beginning when the Priest of Apollo crowns the stern of the ship, is a holy season, during which the city is not allowed to be polluted by public executions. The ship was crowned on the day before the trial, and this was the reason why Socrates lay in prison and was not put to death till long after he was condemned.

Ech. What was the manner of his death, Phædo? What was said

or done? and which of his friends had he with him? or were they not allowed by the authorities to be present? and did he die alone?

Ph. No; there were several of his friends with him.

Ech. If you have nothing to do, I wish you would tell me what passed as exactly as you can.

Ph. I have nothing to do, and I will gratify your wish; for to me, too, there is no greater pleasure than to have Socrates brought to my recollection, whether I speak myself or hear another speak of him.

Ech. You will have listeners who are of the same mind with you, and I hope you will be as exact as you can.

Ph. I remember the strange feeling that came over me at being with him, for I could hardly believe I was present at the death of a friend, and therefore I did not pity him, Echecrates; his mien and his language were so noble and fearless in the hour of death that to me he appeared blessed. I thought that in going to the other world he would not be without a divine call, and that he would be happy, if any man ever was, when he arrived there, and therefore I did not pity him, as might seem natural at such a time. But neither could I feel the pleasure which I usually felt in philosophical discourse (for philosophy was the theme of which we spoke). I was pleased, and I was also pained, because I knew that he was soon to die, and this strange feeling was shared by us all; we were laughing and weeping by turns, especially the excitable Apollodorus. You know the sort of man.

Ech. Yes.

Ph. He was quite overcome, and I myself and all of us were greatly moved.

Ech. Who were present?

Ph. Of native Athenians there were, besides Apollodorus, Critobulus and his father Crito, Hermogenes, Epigenes, Æschines, and Antisthenes; likewise Ctesippus, Menexenus, and some others; but Plato, if I am not mistaken, was ill.

Ech. Was there any strangers?

Ph. Yes, there were; Simmias the Theban, and Cebes, Phædonides, Euclid, and Terpsion, who came from Megara.

Ech. And was Aristippus there and Cleombrotus?

Ph. No, they were said to be in Ægina.

Ech. Anyone else?

Ph. I think these were about all.

Ech. And what was the discourse of which you spoke?

Ph. I will begin at the beginning and endeavour to repeat the entire conversation. You must understand that we had been previously in the habit of assembling early in the morning at the court in which

the trial was held, and which is not far from the prison. There we remained talking with one another until the opening of the prison doors (for they were opened very early), and then went in and passed the day with Socrates. On the last morning the meeting was earlier than usual. This was owing to our having heard on the previous evening that the sacred ship had arrived from Delos, and therefore we agreed to meet very early at the accustomed place. On our going to the prison, the gaoler who answered the door, instead of admitting us, came out and bade us wait and he would call us, "for the eleven," he said, "are now with Socrates, they are taking off his chains and giving orders that he is to die to-day." He soon returned and said that we might come in. On entering we found Socrates just released from chains, and Xanthippe, whom you know, sitting by him, and holding his child in her arms. When she saw us she uttered a cry and said, as women will: "O, Socrates, this is the last time that either you will converse with your friends or they with you." Socrates turned to Crito and said: "Crito, let some one take her home." Some of Crito's people accordingly led her away crying out and beating herself. And when she was gone, Socrates, sitting on the couch, began to bend and rub his leg, saying, as he rubbed: "How singular is the thing called pleasure, and how curiously related to pain, which might be thought to be the opposite of it; for they never come to a man together, and yet he who pursues either of them is generally compelled to take the other." He pursues this topic, and afterwards says: "I am quite ready to acknowledge that I ought to be grieved at death, if I were not persuaded that I am going to other gods who are wise and good (of this I am as certain as I can be of anything of the sort), and to men departed (though I am not so certain of this) who are better than those whom I leave behind; and, therefore, I do not grieve as I might have done, for I have good hope that there is yet something remaining for the dead, and, as has been said of old, some far better thing for the good than for the evil." Crito then says: "The attendant who is to give you the poison has been telling me that you are not to talk much, and he wants me to let you know this; for that by talking, heat is increased, and this interferes with the action of the poison. Those who excite themselves are sometimes obliged to drink the poison two or three times." "Then," said Socrates, "let him mind his business and be prepared to give the poison two or three times, if necessary; that is all." "I was almost certain you would say that," replied Crito; "but I was obliged to satisfy him." "Never mind him," he said.

Then follows a lengthened discussion upon the immor-

tality of the soul, of which it is not possible to give even a sketch, and which is probably regarded by modern readers as more fanciful than substantial. It is, no doubt, the argument of Plato more than of Socrates; but the dramatic fitness of the discussion under the circumstances must be at once recognized; and the attitude of Socrates, his serenity, his courage, his cheerfulness, his moral earnestness, must be regarded as a true portraiture of his conduct during the last hours of his life. Like the spectators at the time, we cannot pity Socrates; his mien and his language are so noble and fearless. He is the same as he ever was, but milder and gentler. Perhaps the extreme elevation of Socrates above his own situation, and the ordinary interests of life, create in the mind an impression stronger than could be derived from arguments that such an one, in his own language, has in him "a principle which does not admit of death." Having in the course of the discussion described what may be the future destiny of the soul, he concludes in this way:—

"I don't mean to affirm that the description I have given of the soul and her mansions is exactly true, a man of sense would hardly say that; but I do say that, inasmuch as the soul is shown to be immortal, we may venture to think, not improperly or unworthily, that something of the kind is true. Wherefore, I say, let the man be of good cheer who has adorned the soul in her proper jewels, which are temperance and justice, and courage and nobility and worth, and arrayed in these *she* is ready to go on her journey to the world below when her time comes." Then turning to us he said: "You and all other men will depart at some time or other; to *me*, already, as the tragic poet would say, the voice of fate calls; for soon I must drink the poison."

Phædo continues the narrative:—

"When he had done speaking, Crito said, 'And have you any commands for us, Socrates; anything to say about your children, or any other matter on which we can serve you?' 'Nothing particular,' he said, 'only, as I have always told you, I would have you look to yourselves; that is a service you may always be doing to me and mine as well as yourselves.' When he had spoken these words he

arose and went into the bath chamber with Crito, who bade us wait, and we waited, talking and thinking of the subject of discourse, and also of the greatness of our sorrow. He was like a father of whom we were being bereaved, and we were about to pass the rest of our lives as orphans. When he had taken the bath his children were brought to him (he had two young sons and an elder one), and the women of his family also came, and he talked to them and gave them a few directions in the presence of Crito, and he then dismissed them and returned to us.

“Now the hour of sunset was near—the hour when the hemlock was to be drunk. He sat down with us again after the bath, but not much was said. Soon the gaoler, who was the servant of the eleven, entered and stood by him, saying, ‘To you, Socrates, whom I know to be the noblest and gentlest and best of all who ever came to this place, I will not impute the angry feelings of other men who rage and swear at me when, in obedience to the authorities, I bid them drink the poison; indeed, I am sure that you will not be angry with me, for others, as you are aware, and not I, are the guilty cause. And so, fare you well, and try to bear lightly what you must needs be. You know my errand.’ Then bursting into tears he turned away and went out. Socrates looked at him and said, ‘I return your good wishes and will do as you bid.’ Then turning to us he said, ‘How kindly the man is! Since I have been in prison he has always been coming to see me, and at times he would talk to me and was as good as he could be to me; and now, see how generously he sorrows for me. But we must do as he says, Crito; let the cup be brought, if the poison is prepared, and if not, let the attendant prepare some.’ ‘Yet,’ said Crito, *‘the sun is still upon the hill tops, and many a one has taken the draught late, and after the announcement has been made to him, he has eaten and drunk, and indulged in other such delights; do not hasten, there is still time; the sun yet lingers.’* ‘Yes, Crito,’ said Socrates, ‘the people of whom you speak were right in doing thus, because they thought they would gain by the delay; but I am right in not doing so, for I do not think I should gain anything by drinking the poison a little later. I should be sparing and saving a life which is already gone. I could only smile at myself for this. Please, then, do as I say, and do not refuse me.’

“Crito when he heard this made a sign to the servant, and the servant went in and remained for some time, and then returned with the gaoler carrying the cup of poison. Socrates said: ‘You, my good friend, who are experienced in these matters, shall give me directions how I am to proceed.’ The man replied: ‘You have only to walk about until your legs are heavy and then to lie down and the poison

will act.' At the same time he handed the cup to Socrates, who in the easiest and gentlest manner, without the least fear or change of colour or feature, looking at the man steadfastly, as his manner was, took the cup and said: 'What do you say about making a libation out of this cup to any god? May I or not?' The man answered: 'We only prepare, Socrates, just so much as we deem enough.' 'I understand,' he said; 'yet I may, and must, pray to the gods to prosper my journey from this to that other world. May this, then, which is my prayer be granted to me.' Then holding the cup to his lips quite readily and cheerfully he drank off the poison. And hitherto most of us had been able to control our sorrow; but now when we saw him drinking, and saw, too, that he had finished the draught, we could no longer forbear, and in spite of myself my own tears were flowing fast, so that I covered my face and wept over myself, for certainly I was not weeping over him, but at the thought of my own calamity in having lost such a companion. Nor was I the first, for Crito, when he found himself unable to restrain his tears, had got up and moved away, and I followed, and at that moment Apollodorus, who had been weeping all the time, broke out into a loud cry which made cowards of us all.

"Socrates alone retained his calmness. 'What is this strange outcry?' he said. 'I sent away the women mainly in order that they might not offend in this way, for I have heard that a man should die in peace. Be quiet, then, and patient.' When we heard that, we were ashamed, and refrained our tears, and he walked about until, as he said, his legs began to fail, and then he lay down according to the directions; and the man who gave him the poison now and then looked at his feet and legs, and after awhile he pressed his foot hard, and asked him if he could feel, and he said, 'No;' and then his leg, and so upwards and upwards, and showed us that he was cold and stiff. And he felt them himself, and said: 'When the poison reaches the heart that will be the end.' He was beginning to grow cold about the groin, when he uncovered his face, for he had covered himself up, and said (they were his last words): 'Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius, will you remember to pay the debt?' 'The debt shall be paid,' said Crito. 'Is there anything else?' There was no answer to the question; but in a minute or so a movement was heard and the attendants uncovered him. His eyes were set, and Crito closed his eyes and his mouth. Such was the end, Echecrates, of our friend, whom I may truly call the wisest and justest and best of all the men whom I have ever known."

This judgment of Phædo regarding Socrates has remained unreversed for more than twenty centuries. In

recent times, a representative man, and one of England's greatest poets, attracted to Athens by her ancient renown, and watching the sun set over the Ægean Sea, felt that this story of Socrates was the one most indelibly associated with the scene, and impressed upon his own imagination, and he commemorated it in the following immortal lines:—

Slow sinks, more lovely ere his race be run,
Along Morea's hills the setting sun ;
Not, as in Northern climes, obscurely bright,
But one unclouded blaze of living light !
O'er the hush'd deep the yellow beam he throws,
Gilds the green wave, that trembles as it glows.
On old Ægina's rock, and Idra's isle,
The god of gladness sheds his parting smile ;
O'er his own regions lingering, loves to shine,
Though there his altars are no more divine.
Descending fast the mountain shadows kiss
Thy glorious gulf, unconquer'd Salamis !
Their azure arches through the long expanse
More deeply purpled meet his mellowing glance,
And tenderest tints, along their summits driven,
Mark his gay course, and own the hues of heaven
Till, darkly shaded from the land and deep,
Behind his Delphian cliff he sinks to sleep.

On such an eve, his palest beam he cast,
When—Athens ! here thy Wisest look'd his last.
How watch'd thy better sons his farewell ray,
That closed their murder'd sage's latest day !
Not yet—not yet—Sol pauses on the hill—
The precious hour of parting lingers still ;
But sad his heart to agonising eyes,
And dark the mountain's once delightful dyes :
Gloom o'er the lovely land he seem'd to pour,
The land, where Phæbus never frown'd before ;
But ere he sunk below Cithæron's head,
The cup of woe was quaff'd, the spirit fled ;
The soul of him who scorn'd to fear or fly—
Who lived and died, as none can live or die !

VERSES.



BEFORE AND AFTER.

“ Looking before and after.”—*Shakespeare*.

“ Now it is not required nor can be exacted at our hands, that we should yield unto anything other assent than such as doth answer the evidence which is to be had of that we assent unto.”—*Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book II., Ch. vii., 5.

“ The ground of credit is the credibility of things credited ; and things are made credible, either by the known condition and quality of the utterer, or by the manifest likelihood of truth which they have in themselves.”—*Ibid.*, Book II., Ch. iv., 1.

Before,—there was but chaos and old night ;
After,—there was a wondrous world, and light :
Before,—man's thought no ordered bounds did know ;
After,—he was aware he had below
Most narrow range, and “ walked in a vain show.”*
That hidden from him wholly, was First Cause,†
And wrapped in mystery, the spirit's laws,
And his own origin ; how life began—
And what may yet be destiny of man ;
Why ancient error hath such iron rule,
And when there shall be end of man's long school ;
When “ times of ignorance ” shall be no more ‡

* Surely every man walketh in a vain show.—*Psalm xxxix.* 6.

† Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself.—*Isaiah* xlv. 15.

‡ The times of this ignorance God winked at.—*Acts xvii.* 30.

"Which God hath winked at,"—or, be shut, the door
 Upon improvement, when who "would repent" *
 Shall be in everlasting darkness pent,
 Because they could not see the things that heal,
 Or what might make or mar, man's final woe and weal.
 For they had been born blind,—without desire
 Of teaching,—and no man had led them higher ;
 Their way of life had been through cold and night,
 And the poor soul within them asked no light ;
 And for these faults men better placed did shake
 Their solemn heads, nor wondered earth should quake ;
 But *those* of a diviner sense than *these*
 Compassion mainly felt,—as for disease
 Transmitted, with each new-engendered life,
 By evil vanquished, in unequal strife ;
 For evil we call *that* which doth destroy
 The source and stay and strength of human joy ;
 And evil of such kind hath been the fruit,
 Whereof,—was ignorance unblameable, the root.†
 Therefore the wise await the mediate word,
 And the momentous judgment have deferred,
 Till at some grand assize, all shall be heard.

* * * * *

I have not lost my faith in man's estate,
 That he shall yet pass through some Eden gate
 Into a region of less clouded light,
 Where, with new faculty of soul and sight,
 He shall discern the true and love the right ;
 Where love and knowledge shall grow more and more,
 As Being's utmost bounds he doth explore,
 And beauty, in its endless forms, adore.
 I have not lost my faith in Reason's sway,
 As the divinest spark that sheds its ray

* If the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon they would have repented.—*St. Matthew xi. 21.*

† Call ignorance my sorrow, not my sin.—*Robert Browning.*

Alike on earth's low walk and Heaven's high way.
I have not lost my faith in the Supreme,
Who made and governeth this mighty scheme,
Who is alone the Just, the Wise and Good,
By poor, presumptuous man misunderstood ;
But whom the eternal ages will unfold,
As Time's mysterious web shall be unroll'd.
But I have lost much faith in that old lore,
Which dim tradition from dark ages bore,
Which patriotic bards long kept afloat,
And later scribes on mystic tablets wrote,
Of our green earth's first forming in six days,—
Mechanic transcript of creative ways—
Ah ! how unlike authentic Nature's hand,
As now we see her work on sea and land ;
And I have lost much faith in Balaam's ass,
In Jonah's whale, and monarchs eating grass,
In orbs of Heaven obedient standing still,
That some barbarians might some others kill.
Thou rolling moon, and all-sustaining sun,
Stayed ye at all, that this poor thing be done,
That wandering tribes of rude Egyptian slaves
Might wreak their vengeance upon Canaan's braves,
Their homes destroy, their wives and children slay,
Like the remorseless Huns of later day ?
Should such marauders now to earth proclaim,
They from some God of love and justice came
To desolate the land with sword and flame,
Who would believe the sacrilegious word,
Though from an angel's voice it might be heard ?
Hath not the Conscience gathered truth and light ?
And shall we backward turn, to anarchy and night,
And moral chaos,—for the good and right ?
To base polygamy, and craft, and guile,
For the just-judging men, on whom the Heavens would
smile ?
Doth the Eternal change His way and will ?

Or man,—*his* landmarks move,—of good and ill ?
Correcting his first rude, imperfect view,
Of what is right and God-like, just and true,
By after-thought, which from experience springs
Through the slow-teaching of all natural things ;
For how should he of low and servile birth
Attain dominion of the peopled earth
And of himself, but by the sovereign power
Evolved through toil of ages, hour by hour ?
The light of nature reached not to the mind,
When first its rays were greeted by mankind,
But sun and stars, the changing earth and sky,
Were construed all amiss, by wond'ring eye,
Till knowledge lit her lamp and thought revealed
A universe,—which erst had been concealed.
Man knew not how Creation came to be,
And hence imagined what he might not see,
Believing any incoherent scheme
Which fancy fashioned in her fitful dream ;
He had no vision of pervading laws,—
Effects ordained by one Almighty Cause,
But, moved himself by a capricious will,
Assumed that the great world did thus its course fulfil.
Before,—the poet was man's spirit guide ;
After,—'twas Science to his doubt replied
Or silent stood, when light had been denied ;
But none did ever the high gift possess,
Which could interpret life's mysteriousness,
Read its dark page, and make it understood,
With all its shade and shine of evil and of good.
Across the unnumbered centuries we gaze,
That we may lift the veil on man's first days,
And lo ! he walked the earth in lowliest guise
Without one trait that linked him to the skies :
After,—he thought and spake as doth a child,
By tales of legendary lore beguiled,
Where faith and fact are all unreconciled ;

Did he not say that once, when evening's breeze,*
 In a fair garden, stirred among the trees,
 His God was visible to mortal sense,†
 And *known*,—despite the human impotence ?
 “ *Who told thee thou wast naked ?* ”—and who told
 That it was God with him did converse hold,
 Communing of a new created earth,
 Which late had fallen from its pristine worth,
 And by one fault brought down eternal doom,
 And on all life,—a universal tomb ?
 Of Justice the world then knew but the name,
 And not the mild forbearance, whence it came,
 And meted unto wrong, un pitying blame,
 Exacted eye for eye and tooth for tooth,‡
 By law, promulgated from Heaven, in sooth ;
 And ruled in wrath, with a vindictive rod,
 Deeming its angry soul, the voice of God,
 And the poor, fleeting judgments of the dust,
 Th' eternal counsels of the Good and Just.
 Was there one justice of the primal day,
 And one, unlike it, which hath since borne sway ?
 Is not Heaven's justice evermore the same,
 Through all the vagrant moods, that move man's praise
 and blame,
 Not once forgetting who made and endowed
 A thing of frailty, and its foes allowed ?
 Did the Creator, in the morn of time,
 With other balances weigh human crime ?
 Or did not mystical, misguided men
 More grievously misread earth's Ruler then,
 Until they came to think that he was one
 Who looked with partial eye on what was done
 In this low sphere,—and had some favoured few,

* *Genesis* iii. 8.

† Whom no man hath seen or can see.—1 *Timothy* vi. 16.

‡ Thine eye shall not pity ; life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.—*Deut.* xix. 21.

Who were as others,—sensual and untrue,
Yet Heaven-regarded—while the rest were left
Without the fold and of its care bereft?
Was such the universal Parent's plan?
That He should be the Father of a clan,*
And not the equal God of the world-scatter'd man?
Men there have been who did believe that they
By a Divine command were bid to slay
Their fellow-men, in any ruthless way;
And can such vain belief avail on high,
When plundered nations to the Father cry,
In the dumb accents of their agony?
No! it is blindness, ignorance, or sin,
Or some dark purpose that doth work within,
Which thus perverts belief,—perchance sincere,
Leaving the code divine, supreme and clear.
That code doth stand, unwarp'd by specious crime,
Unmov'd by all the sophistry of time,
By the perverseness of the good and wise,
And the apparent verdict of the skies
Vouch'd by devotion,—handmaid still of power,—
With benediction in her gorgeous hour.
Man is the creature of each passing age,
His falsehoods vanish and his wraths assuage,
And so fair Hope illumines his history's page.

1887.

* You only have I known of all the families of the earth.—
Amos iii. 2.

CONTRASTS.

Reason . . . is indeed the only faculty wherewith to judge concerning anything, even revelation itself.—*Bishop Butler*.

That authority of men should prevail with men either against or above Reason, is no part of our belief. Companies of learned men, be they never so great and reverend, are to yield unto reason.—*Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book II., ch. vii. 6.

He was firmly grounded in the assurance that reason must rule, in other words, because he had faith in reason.—*Shadworth H. Hodgson*.

I.

Ye reason that ye may induce belief
In things ye deem for man the prime and chief,
And thus were moulded creeds in bold relief.

II.

We reason by as fair and strict a law,
But our conclusions are not those ye draw,
And so ye straightway strike, with beak and claw ;

III.

And Reason, as a traitor, ye arraign,
Because she yields not in her own domain,
When bare Authority demands to reign.

IV.

But Reason her straight path doth still pursue,
Though it be trodden only by the few,
With travail that the many never knew ;

V.

And Reason doth not fear though doubts assail,
Nor with unworthy weapons would prevail,
When the blows ring upon the rusted mail.

VI.

The generations as they pass away,
 May not transmit irrevocable sway,
 Nor man's horizon bound to their own day.

VII.

For man had age of childhood, when he weaved
 Imaginings, with which he was deceived,
 And which, more late, credulity believed.

VIII.

But juster feeling wakes within the soul,
 And truer knowledge doth assert control,
 And with a surer guidance point the goal.

IX.

Man doth not here inherit truth and rest,
 And only doth attain by his own quest
 And faculty,—all fallible at best.

X.

And ever, he did only "know in part—"*
 "Through a glass darkly" he doth scan the chart,
 Whereby through life and strife is steered the mind and
 heart.

XI.

Authority hath had dominion long,
 But hath not had immunity from wrong,
 Nor hath been wise, as it was proud and strong.

XII.

It hath asserted most, when most unskilled,
 And on the narrowest premise it would build
 The Universe,—as dogmatist hath will'd,

XIII.

Boasting of right divine,—until men saw
 In harsh convention, universal law,
 Which ruled them with a blind, despotic awe.

* "Now we see through a glass darkly—now I know in part."—
 I Cor. xiii. 12.

XIV.

Their codes and creeds, were fenced with fable round,
The true and false they always did confound,
And with the chain of error were fast bound ;

XV.

And the old ignorance doth only die
As, one by one, stars fade from nightly sky,
When the sun telleth that the morn is nigh.

XVI.

Yet knowledge grows,—parent of power and light,
And slowly doth disperse the mental night,
Which from our race hath hid the higher right :

XVII.

Then doth awaken kindlier regard
And sympathy for all whose lot is hard
In the life battle, and from hope debarred ;

XVIII.

Who only know the bondman's bitter fate,
Unshielded by the equal fostering State,
Which betwixt might and right should arbitrate.

XIX.

Thus ancient prejudice shall pass away,
And all restraint alike, bear light of day
Beneath impartial Law's benignant sway.

XX.

For Reason ever, with unresting zeal,
From the traditions maketh her appeal,
To what the long experience doth repeal ;

XXI.

And man no other umpire hath than Thought,—
And though with error all his truth be wrought,
He hath not hoped in vain, he doth not toil for naught.

FALK LAWS.

A PROTESTANT REVERIE, CONCERNING
PAPAL RULE.

Mankind advance to the discovery of truth through a series of mistakes and failures.—SIR JOHN HERSCHEL.

Catholicism, we may observe, is commended to the support of Princes as promoting the security of their government—a position supposed to be particularly manifest if the Inquisition be connected with the government; the former constituting the bulwark of the latter. But such a security is based on a slavish religious obedience, and is limited to those grades of human development in which the political constitution and the whole legal system still rest on the basis of actual positive possession; but if the constitution and laws are to be founded on a veritable eternal Right, then security is to be found only in the Protestant religion, in whose principle Rational Subjective Freedom also attains development.—HEGEL (*Philosophy of History*).

I.

*Falk Laws, by Vatican abhorr'd,
Give sceptre to State's rightful Lord,
And blunt ecclesiastic sword.*

II.

Falk Laws—Ye therefore sternly curse,
Though rigours, more than they rehearse,
Ye cherished, when ye could coerce.

By you were Inquisitions built,
By you hath noble blood been spilt
For the mere phantasy of guilt,

That human minds could not believe
What ye had taught them to receive,
For man may err and words deceive.

But vain to you was such appeal ;
Ye answer'd by the rack and wheel,
And the brute soldier's iron heel.

And St. Bartholomew hath told
What faith ye nurtured in the fold,
And on your foes, what doom is roll'd.

And annals of Imperial Spain,
Tell how ye made her conquests vain,
By stern ecclesiastic reign.

And Italy—your shrine and throne,
Reaping the harvest ye have sown,
Hath been for ages overthrown.

And Europe's every realm doth know,
What policy of bonds and woe
From your untemper'd rule did flow.

'Tis *we* have brought humaner code,
'Tis we have broke the yoke and goad,
And freedom on the mind bestow'd.

III.

There is a mystery sublime,
Of Man, and Providence, and Time,
That reacheth backward to the prime,

And forward, to that endless way,
Which Faith doth tremblingly survey,
Beyond this transitory day.

We pause,—before the mighty theme ;
We doubt,—as ye unfold the scheme ;
And ye denounce the wrath supreme.

Ye measure utmost Heaven and Earth,
By words that early had their birth,
And give them everlasting worth.

Tho' words of seeming light and power,
In the world's dim and dawning hour,
Wax old, and lose their primal dower,*

They came of our life's "childish things,"†
Of awe, that from appearance springs,
Which knowledge into ruin brings.

Then fabling Fancy must resign
The forms she worshipp'd as divine,
And Reason build a worthier shrine.

Yet superstition doth not yield
Impassive,—weapons she did wield;
And ye have been her sword and shield.

For, who doth blindly acquiesce
In each dark dogma ye confess,
Without intelligence,—ye bless.

For ye would have a mind inert
And lips that mutter,‡—not assert
One postulate your pride to hurt.

But souls that the clear light have sought,
And the good fight have patient fought
With all the spectres ye have wrought,

Them ye have everywhere oppress'd,
And outlaw'd by your stern behest,
Tho' men, the bravest and the best.

* That which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.—
Heb. viii. 13.

† When I became a man I put away childish things.—*1 Cor.* xiii. 11.

‡ Wizards that peep and that mutter.—*Isaiah* viii. 19.

The best and bravest,—if the deed
That doth from purest love proceed,
Be held diviner than the creed.*

IV.

On Empir'd Rome when erst ye broke,
She made you pass beneath the yoke.
And smote you with a deadly stroke ;
For that her gods and temples all,
Before the Christ, ye said, should fall,
Like crumbling and unbuttress'd wall ;
And then ye scal'd the heights of power,
And made your own, the conqueror's hour,
Your heritage, the despot's dower.
And ye forgot your low estate,
How ye had prosper'd by debate,
And wrestled with an adverse fate ;
And Priest and Potentate combined
To wring submission from mankind,
Like the old idols, false and blind ;
And had ye power, ye have the will,
The polity and purpose still,
That would your old designs fulfil.
This is the lesson ye have taught,—
That Reason, which God gave, is naught,
And force the arbiter of thought.

V.

We are the faithful,—who confide
In conquering truth,—whate'er betide ;
While struggling man with doubt is tried.

* And now abideth faith, hope, *love*, these three ; but the greatest of these is love.—1 *Cor.* xiii. 13, revised version.

For as he climbs the rugged slope,
The vision changeth,—yet the scope,
If dark, is ever bright with hope.

And fearless he can look on high,
For tho' the mists may veil the sky,
He feeleth that a God is nigh.*

He feeleth,—but he may not know
Existence,—that hath none below
From which comparison may grow.

He can but shape from mind and thought
The things that he hath seen and wrought,
Which may at last foreshadow nought.

That *is*;—“the unapproachèd light”—†
The inaccessible to sight—
How should our words express aright?

Yet we despond not of the Race
For—tho' with halting step and pace,
It moveth to a higher place,

Where laws are equal,—where the few
No more the many shall undo,
Or spoil them of the good and true;

And tho' we journey to the dust,
This bateth not our stedfast trust
That He who rules the world is just:

* Feel after him.—*Acts* xvii. 27.

† Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see.—1 *Tim.* vi. 16.

Since God is light,
And never but in unapproachèd light
Dwelt from eternity.—*Milton.*

And just as justice here is known ;
 Nor reaping where He hath not sown,*
 Nor making life an endless moan ;

But from the lowest germ and cell
 Evolving forms, wherein the spell
 Of beauty and of love shall dwell—

Yet with opposing forces rife,
 And only thro' defeat and strife
 Developing the higher life.

With faculty of thought endow'd,
 And by the lower impulse bow'd,
 Man's light doth glimmer thro' the cloud ;

And time, and circumstance, and place,
 The larger or the lesser grace
 Imparted,—he may not efface ;

But, Who the destiny hath fix'd,
 And Who the elements hath mix'd,
 Shall hold the balances betwixt :

He will not ask an angel's might,
 He will not ask an angel's light,
 Where He bestow'd nor force nor sight.

His ways are not the ways of men,†
 Bounded by narrow heart and ken :—
 By judgments of the now and then.

And there remaineth rest and light,
 Shall purge the many films of sight,
 And set the warped affections right.

* An hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown.—*Matt.* xxv. 24.

† My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways.—*Is.* lv. 8.

And who,—that *would* repent—shall learn,*
 And ignorance shall truth discern,
 And hearts unloved,—shall love return.

Here,—opportunity did fail ;
 Brief years and bitter, made the tale ; †
There,—ampler seasons shall prevail ;

And culture anarchy shall quell,
 And in the desert shall compel
 The living verdure yet to dwell. ‡

For mind by nature doth ascend ;
 And, baffled oft, of nobler end,
 Shall yet, its present, all transcend.

An onward course, slow, slow but sure,
 The type for ever shall endure,
 At every stage more blest and pure.

VENICE, 1876.

* If the mighty works . . . had been done . . . they would have repented.—*Matt.* x. 21.

† Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.—*Genesis* xlvii. 9.

‡ The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.—*Is.* xxxv. 1.

ARCHBISHOP MANNING

DENOUNCES THE TYRANNY OF THE TUDORS.

It is not tyranny of Kings,
That the most bitter bondage brings,
Or most doth mar the march of things;

But tyranny of Priest and Pope,
With wider and more withering scope,
Doth quench life's manlier light and hope.

Survey ecclesiastic climes,
Where yet survive the darker times,
And ye shall mark unnumber'd crimes

Against *that* liberty of man
Which dares his destiny to scan,—
Fearless of theologic ban.

The Priest would fetter thought and mind,
And with his mandate he would bind
The knowledge that should bless mankind.

And he would make his will supreme,
And all a nation's strength would seem
As nothing to his priestly dream.*

* Papist first—Englishman afterwards.—*Earl of Denbigh.*

Rightly the monarch doth enact
 Whate'er should rule the social pact,
 And loyal service doth exact ;

And rightly he doth curb and tame
 The subtle foe, who seeks to frame
 A code that maketh void his name,

And public law would supersede,
 By maxims of a treach'rous creed,
 Thro' which allegiance is freed

From trammel of the State's decree ;
 That so the Commonwealth may be
 A vassal, at an alien's knee.

The powers that be doth God ordain ;—
 By right inviolate they reign—
 Prerogative the Priest doth feign.

In his last hours the Master said,
 Earth's crowns descend not on *their* head
 Who follow where my footsteps led ;

Ambition's trophies are not mine ;
 Nor glories of a royal line
 The guerdon of the work divine.*

Yet he, who haughtily doth claim
 Sole rule, in that Redeemer's name,
 Would grasp with this the worldly aim ;

Would govern from the kingly seat ;
 Would hold a sovereignty complete,
 Which all the nations should entreat,

* Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world.—*John*
 xviii. 36.

By falsehood, and thro' craven fear.*
He hath usurp'd dominion here,
Of which the final doom is near.

Slowly its state and strength decay,
And all the terror of its sway
Doth pass, like morning mist, away.

1875.

* Fraud is the resource of weakness and cunning, and the strong though ignorant barbarian was often entangled in the net of sacerdotal policy. The Vatican and Lateran were an arsenal and manufacture which, according to the occasion, have produced or concealed a various collection of false or genuine, of corrupt or suspicious acts, as they tended to promote the interest of the Roman Church. Before the end of the eighth century, some apostolic scribe, perhaps the notorious Isidore, composed the Decretals and Donation of Constantine, the two magic pillars of the spiritual and temporal monarchy of the Popes.—*Gibbon*, chap. xlix.

ROME, SPAIN, AND BRITAIN.

Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.—ST. PAUL.

From of old ye vanquish'd Spain,
 And with iron hand,
 From the mountains to the main,
 Ye have ruled the land.

Ye have banish'd, burn'd, and spoil'd,
 All that cross'd your path,—
 Aught that your dominion foil'd
 Fell before your wrath.

There was not a human power,
 None ye deem'd divine—
 Courtly hall, embattled tower,
 Ancient dome and shrine,

But ye held them, all and each ;—
 Art, and books, and lore,
 What ye listed,—they must teach—
 Whom ye would,—adore.

Thus ye moulded man and mind ;
 Every social law—
 What the intellect doth find,
 And what kindles awe.

Woman, with her matchless might,
 At your foot did kneel,
 All her purest love and light
 Lent unto your zeal.

From the cradle to the grave,
Act, and word, and thought,
Wore your fetters as a slave,
And your purpose wrought.

So it fared,—this subject land
Ye were sworn to keep;
And the labour of your hand
Ye have come to reap.

Anarchy, and strife, and blood,
Falsehood, fear, and shame,
As an overwhelming flood,
Of your empire came.

From of old *we* broke your chain;
And the world doth see
Bonds and infamy for Spain,—
Britain, great and free.

THE CLERICAL PERVERT.

MOVED by the Holy Ghost,—as then he said,
 In English Church, where he was born and bred,
 He sought ordaining hands upon his head

And priest was made ; and priestly wonders wrought ;
 Which he discovered erst were void and naught,
 And but a mere pretence of all he taught.

In this great act, if thus he grossly err'd,
 And Holy Ghost within him had not stirr'd,
 What is the worth of his most solemn word ?

And how supernal things should he attest
 Who hath conspicuous fail'd, beyond the rest
 Vaunting of mystic powers he ne'er possess'd.

To bind and loose, to change the bread and wine,
 To stand within the Apostolic line,
 While only layman in an empty shrine ?

CARDINAL MANNING APPLAUDS
INNOCENT III., AND HIS TIMES.

From Innocent the Third to him who now
Doth wear the triple crown upon his brow,
What miracles of change the years have wrought,
In all the ways of men, and all their thought !
Earth's mightiest kings Pope Innocent defied,
Until they basely bow'd before his pride ;
With ghostly terrors he kept realms in awe,
And his imperious will was Europe's law.
Look on that Europe, as it lives to-day ;—
And lo ! this despot-doom hath pass'd away ;
Gone,—all the greatness that was vaunted then,—
The myriad banners, and the mailed men
By Pope array'd, and duped with words sublime,
To fall, far off in fight, or sink in crime.
People or Prince, permission ask not now,
To rule or reign, if Pope would deign allow ;
But Pope,—not regal,—with much harmless wile,
Doth groan of bonds, and rulers doth revile ;
Yet the world stands,—nay, grows in grace and might,
In work humane, and in true guiding light,
And leaves behind with joy, the Papal night.
Vainly doth Pope call down avenging fire ;
No lightnings flash, no whelming waves retire,
And no sun pauseth, at his fierce desire.
Behold ! Italia frameth code and law
For public good,—tho' Pope doth overawe,
And wrath denounce,—and yet nor fault nor flaw
Mars just authority,—tho' dreamers quake
As some pernicious power doth needful break,
Some priest-made maxim, or some slavish word,
Which the bow'd nations once adoring heard.

IN AN ITALIAN CHURCH.

"*Ye ignorantly worship.*"—ST. PAUL, *Acts xvii. 24.*

"*Spurious service consists essentially in the notion of winning the Divine favour by other means than by uprightness of moral will.*"—KANT.

Compare this tinsel and fantastic scene
 With English Church upon a village green ;
 Compare *that* manly sense, that sober thought,
 With the poor pantomime that here is wrought ;
That white-robed priest, who lives man's order'd life,
 Chastened and purified by child and wife,
 With this mute, glittering thing, who stands apart,
 Unsanctified by lore of home and heart.
 These tawdry trappings, this theatric show,
 Shed they one gleam of light on things below ?
 These forms grotesque and hues of vulgar paint
 Enshrining legend of some mythic saint,
 This web of worship, wove with spurious art,
 Which veils with symbols vain the spirit's part ;
 Can such be reasoned service* of a soul,
 By truth informed and prescient of the goal ?
 But,—one responds—survey the nobler shrine,
 Where everything attests the hand divine ;
 Where art's most glorious triumphs are displayed,
 And where the mighty dead have knelt and prayed.
 I have,—with ever-growing wonder ; then
 Have turn'd my thoughts upon the shrunken men

* Your reasonable service.—*Romans xii. 1.*

Who live within the shadow of the pile,
 And in no good or grace have grown the while.
 To please the sense, delight the eye and ear,
 This is the arduous task attempted here ;
 To train self-governed men, and make them free,
 Degenerate Church ! belongeth not to thee.
 And in this lower conflict, if ye fail,
 How should ye triumph there,—within the vail ?
 If earth ye know not, nor her laws discern,
 How of the Heavenly Kingdom should ye learn ?
 Religion hath the promise here below,*
 And of that other world to which we go ;
 And she, who here, her votaries doth not save
 From ignorance and baseness of the slave,
 Who is not pioneer of light, that brings
 Healing and health and joy upon its wings,
 And doth not fill the horn of life with what
 Gladdens and elevates this mortal lot,
 But pays disciples with the world to come,
 And of the Present, is all blind and dumb,
 (Save that, denouncing gold as evil root,
 She taketh to herself, both bloom and fruit) ;
 Religion of this type, howe'er it boast
 Antiquity, Succession and its Host,
 Bishops and Cardinals, and wealth and fame,
 Incense and temples of immortal name,
 Is but imposture,—not celestial plan
 To beautify and bless this home of man.†

* " Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."—*Tim.* iv. 8.

† The earth hath he given to the children of men.—*Psa.* cxv. 16.

AT NAPLES.

POPE ! thy religion here hath borne the sway
 For centuries ; thou couldst mould the clay
 As doth the potter ; teaching all thy creed,
 And planting in the soil that heavenly seed
 Which doth not die, but ever beareth fruit,
 Till in immortal clime it taketh root.
 Such was thine office ; thou hadst gold and might,
 And for thyself a palace of delight ;
 And didst become a potentate so great,
 That earthly monarchs in thy halls did wait ;
 And many nations listen'd to thy word,
 As though a voice supreme from Heaven they heard.
 Where then is the vast flock of wand'ring sheep,
 Which the Chief Shepherd bade thee feed and keep ?
 Pass through this mighty city, street and lane,
 Mark every human form it doth contain,
 And say what Pagan land more piteous sight
 Could offer to thy view through realms of night,—
 More ignorance, supineness, and the dearth
 Of all that gives life dignity and worth.
 Pope ! of this darksome scene we ask account ;
 Hadst thou not healing water from the fount
 These to baptize,—regenerating stream,
 Which from primeval fault doth man redeem ?
 Hadst thou not canonised saints who save,
 And whose good works avail beyond the grave,
 To shed upon the frail—benighted—here

The light which doth in all their life appear ?
 Didst thou not sit in the Apostles' seat,
 And couldst thou not, each day, make God, and eat,*
 And with this food divine the people feed ?
 Hadst thou not "relics" too, for their great need ?
 And miracles—pictures with moving eyes,
 And hard, dead blood of saint, which liquefies ?
 And couldst thou not,—infallible,—declare
 Most secret hidden thing in earth and air,
 "Immaculate Conception,"—that great knell
 Of the world's want and woe, and deeper Hell ?
 Pope ! is not this inheritance all thine ?
 Dost thou not challenge it, of gift divine ?
 Where is the fruit, then, of this awful dower ?
 Why is earth not as Eden at this hour ?
 Thy priests are legion, crowding every fane,
 Why is this multitude not born again ?
 Why doth it yet remain as the rude dross
 Of the dark heathen time, before the Cross ?
 What matter paternosters and the Creed,
 With the mind shrouded and the evil deed ?
 What matter pictures and a gorgeous pile,
 Where the man croucheth alway, mean and vile ?
 Was it to swell the hierarchic pride,
 Or man exalt, that He of Bethlehem died ?
 Didst thou not build a proud, triumphant dome
 Where thou didst wield thy power—in that old Rome
 Swayed of the Cæsars ? Didst thou not surpass
 In glory of thy marble, gold and brass,
 Whatever they achiev'd, that conquering race,
 When they would lift on high, the Imperial place ?

* "And then how I shall lie through centuries,
 And hear the blessed mutter of the Mass,
 And see God made and eaten all day long."

"The Bishop orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's Church."—*Robert Browning.*

But they were born to rule with iron rod,
And thou to teach mankind the ways of God :
Their work they did with an unsparing hand ;
Where is the light and joy thou gav'st the land ?
Temple and monument send forth reply,
Colour and Form and Art that may not die :
But for these poor, who shame the generous sun,
Pope ! in thine hour of pride, what hast thou done ?

ROME, *October*, 1879.

LIMITATIONS.

Most ignorant of what he's most assured.—MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

For we know in part and we prophesy in part.—1 COR. xiii. 9.

We dogmatise at the point where ignorance begins.—DEAN MANSEL.

I.

This world of common things we know in part,
 But by appearance much are led astray ;
 From blundering premiss mostly do we start,
 And thro' unnumber'd pitfalls make our way ;

2.

And Nature doth not stay this errant course,
 Nor light of truth upon her works bestow,
 Till self-complacence doth abate its force,
 And he hath learn'd to doubt who seem'd to know.*

3.

We prophesy in part—of Him who made
 The orbs of light and intellect of man—
 As tho' His boundless work we had survey'd,
 And comprehended its eternal plan.

4.

We prophesy in part,—by feeling led
 Of fate and fear, which may be but a dream ;
 And which has ebb'd and flow'd, as years have fled,
 And as life's day, more dark or bright did seem.

* Philosophy commences when men begin to doubt.—*Dean Mansel.*

5.

Whatever we can know, or think, or feel,
 From this terrestrial scene hath been derived;
 And words, which worlds inscrutable reveal,
 Are earthborn symbols, by man's art contrived,

6.

And never can depict, ethereal zone
 Which lies beyond this sublunary frame,
 Nor bring the unapparent and unknown
 Within our vision, by an empty name.

7.

To know in part and prophesy in part,
 Is root of error, with our thought entwined
 However it rebel,—the glowing heart,
 Whatever it achieve,—the ardent mind.

8.

And yet this little part may wider grow
 As man his impotence doth most confess,
 And he will come more certainly to know
 As the old arrogance assumeth less.

9.

For the truth dawneth on the true of heart,
 The patient mind no flatteries allure
 Which works and waits;—content to know in part,
 Until the light ariseth clear and sure.

10.

Content to bear the bigot's scorn and pride,
 That so it may attain the Good and True;*
 Not from the Old,—unreasoning—turn'd aside,
 Nor warp'd by prejudice, against the New.

* Not as tho' I had already attained.—*Phillipians* iii. 12.

11.

All guiltless we may err of sun and star,
 Of meanest things, beneath our feet, that grow ;
 But, if the Creed's deep mystery we mar,
 The meed we merit is eternal woe.*

12.

Hard fate of him who only knows in part,
 And whose beliefs are born so wild and strange,
 Begotten of untutor'd mind and heart,
 In time and place, which none might choose or change.

13.

Belief, from knowledge taketh hue and form ;
 And ignorance will anything believe ;
 Will demons find in fire, and cloud, and storm,
 And with all nature will itself deceive.

14.

And the frail men, who fram'd the wondrous Creed,
 Were subject to like passions with their kind ; †
 Mov'd by the same ambition, fear and need,
 And in the rayless darkness not less blind.

15.

And who should judge of guilt and wrong and blame,
 When the soul's history he may not know,
 Nor mark, how life's first planted seeds became
 The root from whence most bitter fruit did grow ?

* Without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.—*Athanasian Creed*.

† We also are men of like passions with you (Barnabas and Paul).
 —*Acts* xiv. 15.

16.

And how should man another mind explore,*
 Its depths and shallows,—secret rocks of fear,
 And currents, eddying on some fatal shore,
 While not a warning light ascendeth near?

17.

And how should *he* believe, who hath not heard
 Of things to be believed? † or how should they
 Whose kin and ancestry, have always err'd,
 Feel the sad burden, or find better way?

18.

Yet the stern dogmatist doth smite them all,
 With one dread pang of unavailing pain;
 Nor doth the unequal way ‡ his heart appal,
 But *seems* the equal way of Heavenly reign,

19.

Thus he doth everywhere interpret God
 By his own feeling;—and the Right and Just
 Doth measure by his own barbarian rod,
 As tho' he were not offspring of the dust

20.

With words and understanding of a child,
 And the rash impulse which it doth obey;
 To manly work and thought unreconcil'd,
 Not having put his childish things away.§

* What man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man, which is in him?—1 Cor. ii. 11.

† How shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard?—Rom. x. 14.

‡ Hear, now, O house of Israel; is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal?—Ezekiel xviii. 25.

What mean these words, equal and unequal?

§ When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.—1 Cor. xiii. 2.

21.

Thro' a dim glass we now but darkly see*
What is the present and from whence we come,
What, in the endless future there may be,
When earth's familiar voices all are dumb.

22.

Yet Hope, which bears us thro' this mortal strife,
Looks forth undaunted on the pathless gloom ;
Expects that He who gave this germ of life
Will give it ampler scope beyond the tomb—

23.

Expects that the weak light which glimmers here
Is but the dawning of diviner day
Wherein the Good more plainly will appear
And with more suasive force hold firmer sway.

September, 1880.

* Now we see through a glass darkly.—1 *Cor.* xii. 12. Βλεπομεν γὰρ ἀρτι δὲ εἰσοπτρου ἐν ἀινιγματι (in an enigma).

SPEECHES OF POPE PIUS IX.

Infallible—just now and then,
 And now and then—a fool ;
 Well may the worldly wonder when
 Each mood of mind doth rule.

Strange that a human soul should rise
 Infallible to be,
 And that anon it grovelling lies,
 As weak and prone as we.

Transfigured,—see him on the mount,
 As God, discerning all ;
 A clear, untroubled, crystal fount,
 On which no shade may fall.

Then mark him in the vale below,
 By passion moved and pride—
 Signs of the times ; unskill'd to know,*
 Or obstinate to chide.

Then listen, as he wildly raves
 At all beneath the sun,
 At the great work that wind and waves
 And time and tide have done.

Moments infallible should sure
 Some tokens leave behind,
 In wisdom that would more endure
 And words less gross and blind.

1875.

* Can ye not discern the signs of the times ?—*Matt.* xvi. 3.

IN MEMORY OF HENRY A. BRIGHT.

I shall not see his like again,
Though very far my foot may stray
Among the busy haunts of men,
Or on our life's secluded way.

A friend—how true and gentle, he ;
A soul—how full of purest life ;
A mind—that everywhere could see
The beauty with which earth is rife.

The larger thought he still pursued,
Amid the strifes where men contend ;
With the high purpose was endued,
And the self-sacrificing end.

Ah me ! our world is poorer left,
Since he is gone and comes no more ;
But memory cannot be bereft
Of that which he hath been before.

IN MEMORY OF ALICE B.

AND so the gentle spirit passed away,
Unsoil'd by earthly stain through her short stay ;
And if beyond this transitory scene,
There be some clime more blissful and serene,
Where patient, loving hearts shall live again,
Through some high destiny ordained for men,
Who would detain her from that purer shore,
To tempt life's many pains and pangs once more ?
Farewell ! the morning of our day is best,
With all its sunny hopes and friendships blest,
And these were hers, and now she is at rest.

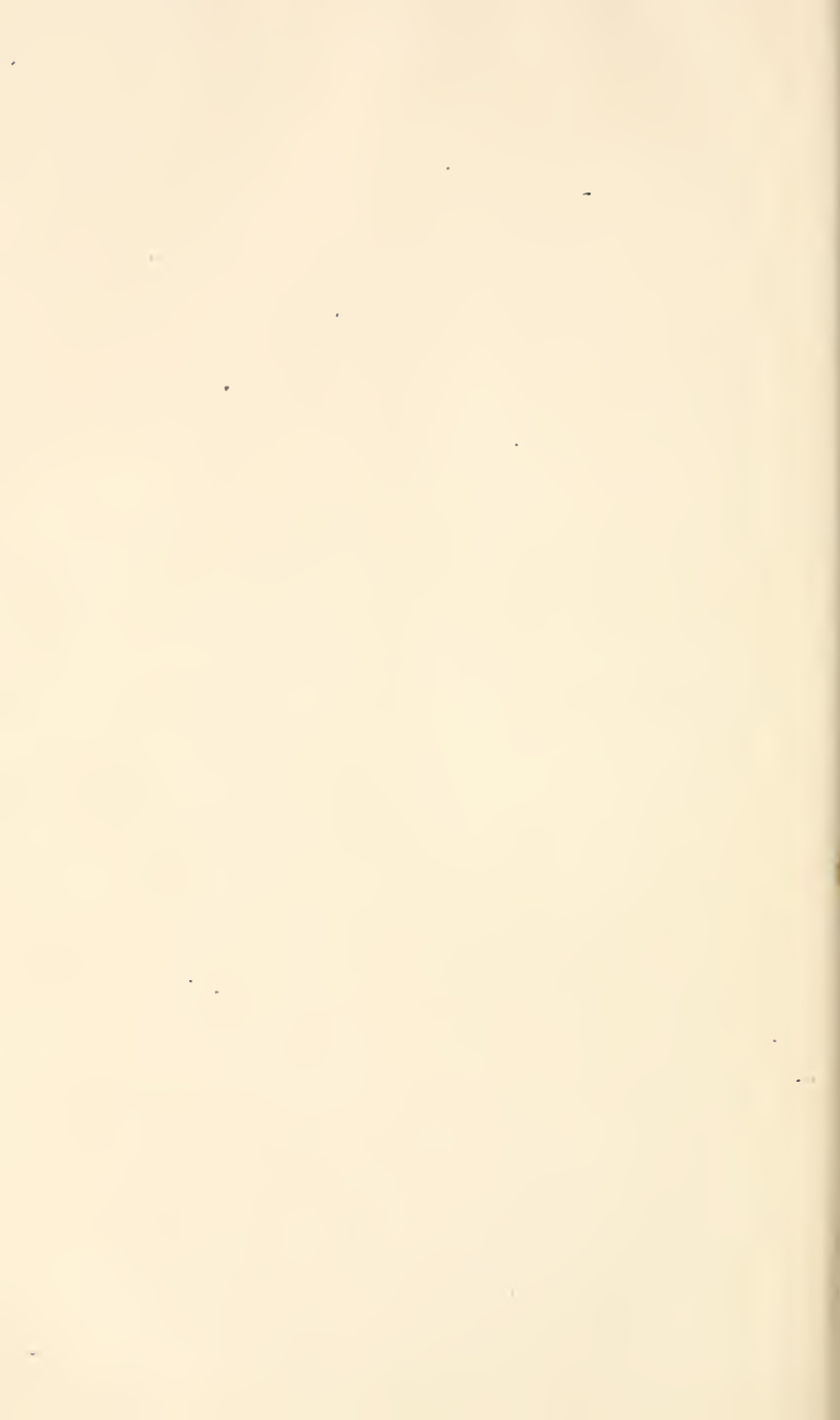
AT CHURCH STRETTON.

To the churchyard where they bore her—
 Sleeping,——sleeping
 Came we, after years passed o'er her,
 Weeping,——weeping.

Time no healing balm had brought us;
 Only,——only
 To a settled grief had wrought us,
 Lonely,——lonely.

Making all the vacant places
 Drearer,——Drearer,
 And her form that memory traces
 Dearer,——dearer.

Hath our life, then, its renewing
 Never,——never?
 And is death the all un-doing
 Ever,——ever?



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